

# AMERICANS ALL



JOHN MERRITTE DRIVER





0463  
20278  
To Mr. Rogers  
from the Author  
John Merritt Davis

Nov. 9, 1916.





**AMERICANS ALL**



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A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT WAR

BY  
JOHN MERRITTE DRIVER



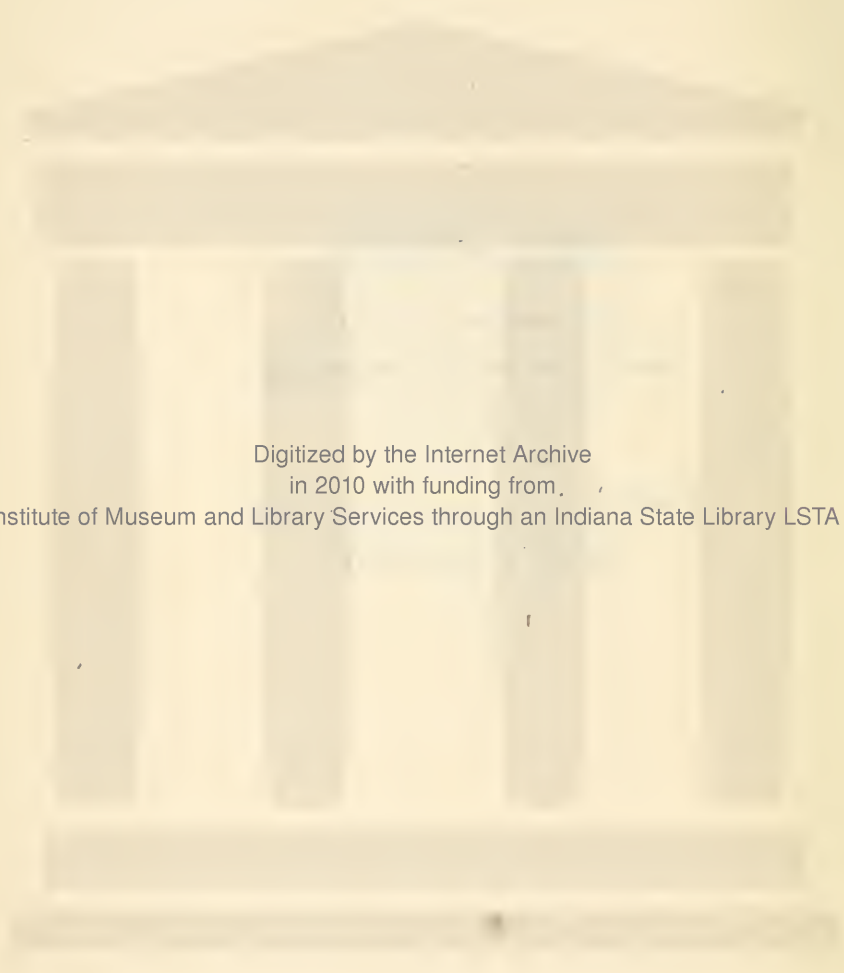
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1911



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*DEDICATED TO*

*The memory of those  
who followed the banners of  
Grant and Lee,—  
Americans all,  
Equally brave, equally patriotic,  
equally conscientious.*



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## FOREWORD

WHILE this book is a novel and not a history, the author has introduced some historical personages and has aimed to portray them faithfully and with impartiality to the conflicting issues they represented. In his pen portraits of Lincoln and analyses of his unique character the author has been aided by the memories of his father, who was a friend of Lincoln. During the last years of Jefferson Davis' life the author was one of his inner circle of friends and he has drawn on his own recollections in portraying the great but ill-starred Cavalier.

"It was thus I knew Jefferson Davis," the author says, "a quarter of a century ago; I a young and ardent collegian; he still surrounded by the slaves and their descendants who had scorned to accept the freedom proffered by the Emancipation Proclamation; he still the high-souled aristocrat and cavalier, dignified and stately as any prince-royal, with moral character unscathed, and with all the sweet gentleness and simplicity of a child.

"I last saw him one day at noon. The morning had been spent in his library, in his garden, and in driving together over his plantation, holding high discourse concerning God, eternity, and the immortality of the soul. Lunch had been served on the south veranda overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, and afar the green isles of the Southern Seas. A colored servitor stood behind each chair, as in the 'good old days,' and a large bouquet of sweet Southern roses graced the center of the table. The carriage that was to bear me to the station was waiting at the foot of the veranda-steps. With all

## FOREWORD

the dignity of a Roman senator, Mr. Davis arose and took my hand, his other hand resting on my shoulder, and gently said: 'Good-bye—good-bye, my friend! And may the good God ever have you in His keeping, and speed you in your quest! And my best wishes to your people, and to all the people of the North; and to the great American Union: Peace, Prosperity, and Perpetuity!' "

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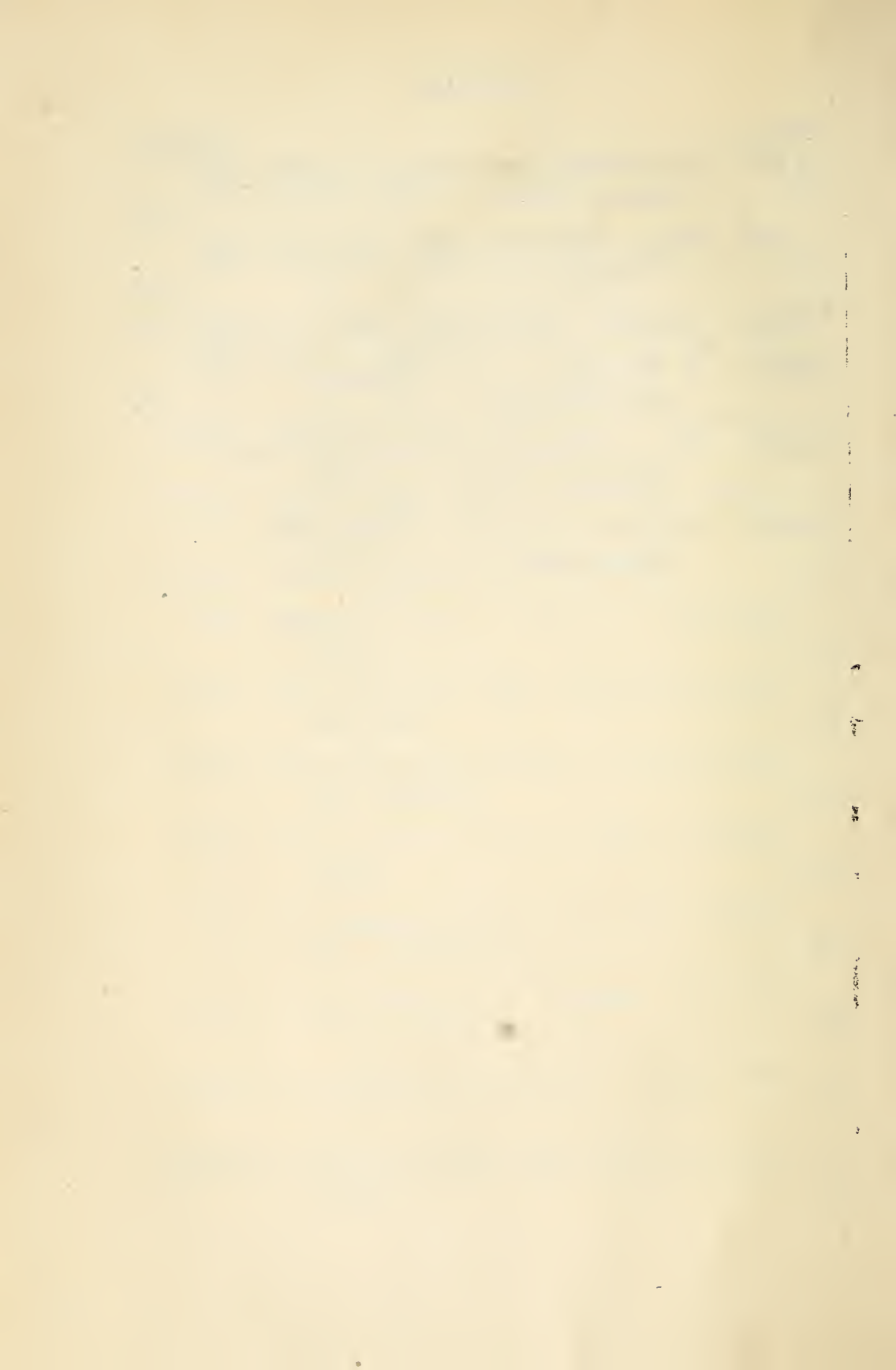


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# AMERICANS ALL

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## CHAPTER I

### A FESTAL NIGHT IN THE MEXIC CAPITOL

IT was a perfect September night. Winds, soft and aromatic, blew gently; and the floral and arboreal world seemed to be *en fete*. For two days it had been raining constantly, with occasional electrical storms, but now the skies were radiant, crystalline. Plazas, parks, and gardens were riotous with color, the air vibrant and a-ripple with laughter, while music—perfume of the flowers of speech, incense rising from the fires of glowing passion—added lilt and gaiety to the pleasure-loving throng.

“The Mexican Capitol is in chains”—so read Santa Anna’s Proclamation—yet never was freer, or more blithe and *insouciance*. What though plain and mountain-pass were crimson with Aztec, Mexic, and Spanish blood; what though every strategic town and city—Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Jalapa, Perota, Pueblo, Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and the Capitol itself—was in the hands of the Invader; what though Washington was plotting to rob them of their sovereignty and make them vassals; what though the Conqueror’s uniform was everywhere in evidence, and the Palace of the Montezumas had become El Palacio del Americano; what though troops were to leave at dawn to garrison every principal city, and to extort tribute from every luckless citizen—by the fires of persecution to extract golden oil

from every fin and scale of the giant Mexic "fish?" Ah, the To-day Race! What matter for To-morrow? Vivamos mientras que vivimos; mañana será otro día.\*

The Montezuman city was captive—yet free. It was the policy of Polk, though opposed by Webster and Calhoun, to take their territory by force, and their hearts by stealth. To this end the iron hand was sheathed in perfumed velvet; the stern command metred and set to music; the blast of the cornet, and the shriek of the trumpet mellowed to the coo of the thrush-like piccolo and clarionet—and the policy was working like a charm.

The ball—unique, spectacular, brilliant, given at the palace of the illustrious Fernando y Roxas—was over. There are few such cases on record—conquerors garlanded and accorded festal hospitality by the conquered. But, personally, the conquerors had been kind and considerate; and War, usually devastating, in this instance had been enriching—had brought a multitude of opulent purchasers, at hitherto undreamed of prices, of all they had to sell.

Indeed the conquered were less serious than the conquerors, for the Northern skies were ominous with the dark clouds and angry rumblings of an impending conflict between the "States," a conflict upon which this "invasion" might have a fateful bearing—but for the hour apprehension was flung to the wind, and merry jest and good-natured badinage reigned supreme.

Among the American guests at the ball was General Scott, who called early, arrayed in all the military trappings of which he was inordinately fond, accompanied by a brilliant retinue of officers. Among them were some destined to great renown—both eulogy and obloquy: Captain Robert E. Lee—tall, graceful, low-voiced, easily the handsomest,

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\*Let us live while we live; tomorrow there will be another day.

and most eagerly-sought by men and women alike; Col. Jefferson Davis—tall, stately, a profound scholar, singularly eloquent, a trifle haughty, with a culture equal to that of the proudest grandee of Spain; Major Beauregard—of Latin descent, of warrior training and prowess, keen of wit and repartee, a Beau Brummel in social intercourse, an unsurpassed *raconteur*, and destined to fire the first gun in the Rebellion of the States. Also four generals were present: Pillow, Quitman, Buckner, and Crittenden—in character and bravery worthy of the epaulettes they wore; also Captains Hardee and Holmes, and Lieutenants Gardner and Ewell.

No less conspicuous were certain others: Captain John A. Logan—stocky, swarthy, fearless, boisterous, long, straight black hair, eagle-eyed, suggestive of the Incas; Captain Kearney—favorite of General Scott, first to enter Mexico City, hero of the Algerine War, *feted* in Paris, destined to die at Chantilly; Lieut. George G. Meade—heir to laudit and censure at Gettysburg, losing by lack of generalship what he had won by preponderance of numbers; Lieutenant McClellan—marching on to immeasurable praise and dispraise, but now at his best, easily the equal of Lee and Davis and Beauregard in culture, gentility, and all the charms of social grace; also—U. S. GRANT.

After paying his respects to Senor and Senora Roxas Captain Grant spoke to no one; nor did any of the gay revelers speak to him. In a retired alcove he smoked cigar after cigar, mused in silence, and took note of things and—*men*. No one, not even the gracious host and hostess, paid any attention to him. There was no halo about his head. There was no lilting, vaulting, dazzling epigram or dithyramb on his lips. There was no psychic intuition on their part, or intimation on his, of his future. Not even Davis'



attention was arrested; Lee's horoscope gave no hint of Appomattox.

*The master of their destinies was there but they knew him not.*

After the ball the American officers dropped in at a fashionable *pulqueria*, most of them ordering *aguardiente*—the night was chill; besides, the American palate rebelled against the national drink. They were in *high fettle* and, after a little general joking and jesting, and apropos of nothing, Logan boomed,

"What's to be the outcome of all this damned nonsense?"

Apparently he was addressing Major Jackson, afterward revered by the soubriquet of "Stonewall," and even now noted for his austere piety.

"What do you mean, Captain?" It was the low voice of Beauregard. Logan's brusquerie was immensely amusing to the suave and polished Southerner.

"Oh, all this damned highway robbery down here in Mexico. As for me I feel like a blasted brigand. What right have we down here, anyway?"

"Why, Captain, we're here to—but don't you remember? President Polk puts it in less than a dozen words: 'The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens.' There, Captain, you have it in a nutshell." It was McClellan speaking, and in a manner to egg Logan on.

"Oh, hell! Look here, gentlemen——" but Black Jack was too wrathful to trust himself farther and strode from the room.

"But see here, Captain McClellan," said General Quitman of Mississippi, "you've quoted President Polk glibly enough but what does Tom Corwin, of Ohio, say?"

"I don't recall any speech of Corwin's, General; doubtless it was something very pious, however, and exceedingly calm and conservative." McClellan was in high glee.

"Well, I'll tell you. Corwin said, 'If I were a Mexican I would say to you, have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine we will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves.' What do you think of that?"

"Did Corwin say that, Quitman?" It was the first time Grant had spoken.

"Certainly."

"And you indorse it?"

"As a gentleman, yes—why not?"

"Oh, nothing." Grant had already resumed his cigar, and lapsed into silence.

The night had grown very chill. A peon closed the door. Through a window came contagious sounds of mirth and joy. A silvery voice, clear and high, sang a passionate song:

\*"Were I a god, I'd give—the air,  
Earth, and the Sea; the angels fair;  
The Skies; the golden Worlds around;  
The demons whom my laws have bound;  
Chaos and its dark progeny;  
All Space and all Eternity  
For *one* love-kiss from thee!"

There was the rattle of homeward-bound carriage-wheels on the pavement without. Somebody upset a chair, and a tipsy reveler dropped his wine-glass on the marble floor.

Every face was turned, inquiringly, to Col. Jefferson Davis, somewhat on account of his high character, great wealth, peerless social position, and the prestige of being General Taylor's son-in-law, and now the husband of the granddaughter of one of New Jersey's most gifted governors; but mainly because he was fresh from the halls of

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\* Victor Hugo.

Congress, and but recently had been the fiery and fearless Tom Corwin's colleague.

"You would not be offended, would you, Colonel Davis," said Lieutenant Meade, "were I to turn inquisitor for a moment?"

"I cannot conceive of any question, Lieutenant Meade, I would not gladly answer, provided I were able to do so."

"Thank you, Colonel Davis. Then what is the ultimate purpose of the South?"

Colonel Davis laughed. "Really, Lieutenant Meade, I'm better qualified to speak regarding the trend and temper of the North. I'm a Kentuckian, you know, born at Hopkinsville—and that's pretty far North. Then you must remember I have spent eleven years in the extreme North—New York, Northern Missouri, Northern Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. But if you'll be a little more specific I'll be obliged to you"—with a deferential inclination of his head.

"Very well, Colonel Davis. Is it the ambition of the South to annex the whole of Mexico? And to transform these twenty or thirty Mexican provinces into as many American Slave States? And, upon the assumption that such is the ambition of the South, where does Colonel Davis stand—with Tom Corwin, or with President Polk?"

Every eye was fixed on the thin, grave, intellectual face of Colonel Davis; and that no word of his reply should escape them chairs were instinctively drawn closer together. Captain Grant lighted a fresh cigar, and McClellan and Kearney smiled at each other as they simultaneously placed their open palms behind their ears. Hardee and Crittenden inclined their heads, and Beauregard, waving his hand at Pillow and Buckner, helped himself to another brandy-soda.

"As to the purpose of the President," Colonel Davis



slowly said, "I think there's no doubt but he intends to acquire and annex, if possible, the whole of Mexico."

"And the South—is it with him?"

"You forget, gentlemen, that Mr. Calhoun, the greatest man in the South, is violently opposed."

"And—you?"

"Well, I'm a soldier rather than a statesman. The term 'politician,' as now used, I detest. But if my personal views, however inconsequential, are desired, I should not hesitate to give them—and all the more since we are all soldiers and gentlemen."

"In the first place," continued Colonel Davis, "*I am an Expansionist*. I believe that Nature and Destiny have decreed that our sovereignty should extend from ocean to ocean, and from yonder narrow strip of land to the South, where we ought to, and presently shall, wed the two great oceans, to the North Pole. I would preëempt for the Stars and Stripes every foot of North America, by diplomacy if possible, by war if necessary. There should be no line of separation North or South, East or West—and no divided sovereignty. Personally, therefore, I would annex Mexico, the States of Central America, the Islands of the Southern Seas, and everything northward to the axis of the Earth."

"For the sake of Slavery, Colonel Davis?" Captain Kearney had spoken.

"No, Captain Kearney; for the sake of the martyrs who shed their blood all the way from Lexington and Concord to New Orleans and Puget Sound; for the sake of the patriots and heroes who hazarded and suffered everything that our independence might be achieved, and the foundation of our Government might be rightly and righteously laid; for the sake of the better government and purer religion we could give; that Caucasian, Anglo-Saxon Democracy—I speak in

the broad sense of the term—and Civilization might be assured of perpetuity.”

Colonel Davis had spoken with great earnestness, solemnity even, and his auditors were visibly affected.

“But, Colonel Davis,” inquired Captain R. E. Lee, “how could we maintain the unity, and secure a safe and stable administration of a government covering such a vast territory, and containing such a heterogenous population?”

“I have given much thought to that question, Captain Lee. However, we now reckon distance by time rather than space. Hence I would annihilate distance by speedy communication, granting government aid for the building of a great railroad from the Pacific Coast to some central point east of the Rocky Mountains; then two converging lines, one perhaps to Memphis, the other, say to St. Joseph, Missouri, to connect with roads stretching away in every direction to the Atlantic Coast. In the same manner I would connect Chicago with Mexico, Central America, and the inevitable inter-oceanic canal at Panama. Private enterprise would doubtless build railroads from Chicago direct to Charleston, South Carolina, and from New York to New Orleans—likewise from Chicago north, north-east, north-west, to the most distant settlements on both oceans, and even to points within the Arctic Circle—territory rich with fertile soil, vast forests, invaluable fauna and flora, immense deposits of coal and iron, and, possibly, the precious metals, silver and gold.”

“You have heard, Colonel Davis, of a man named Lincoln?”

“Yes,” indifferently. “A member, I believe, of the Lower House.”

“And the New England Abolitionists?”

“Yes,” with a humorous smile.

“Now, Colonel Davis,” asked Lieutenant McClellan, “sup-

pose Mexico, Central America, and all the rest, were to succeed in maintaining their territorial entity, and were to decline to be benevolently assimilated, so that no new Slave territory could be annexed, and the Abolitionists were to multiply till they were able to enact Universal Emancipation—what then? Would Colonel Davis follow Calhoun and Toombs into the Secession camp, or stand with Corwin and Adams?”

“Is this a hypothetical question?”

“Not in the least,” replied Captain Hardee.

“But you gentlemen are merely jesting.”

“To the contrary, Colonel Davis, we are most serious.”

“Then I will answer you. While revering Mr. Calhoun boundlessly, I do not always agree with him. For instance,” continued Colonel Davis, “Mr. Calhoun is an out-and-out free-trader—I am not. Theoretically I am a free-trader, but practically I am a protectionist. I am now advising my Southern friends to turn from agriculture to manufacturing, and thus beat New England at her own game. Again, Mr. Calhoun is a Secessionist—I am a Nullificationist, but *not* a Secessionist.”

“We do not quite understand, Colonel Davis,” was chorused. “Please explain.”

“Simply this: by a sort of state index and referendum, taken as a proposed Amendment to the National Constitution and submitted to the several states, a law might be nullified in a given state, by and with the consent of the sister states, without said state withdrawing, or being expelled, from the Union. For instance, the protective tariff is a good law for manufacturing Massachusetts while it is a curse to agricultural Mississippi. By nullification, were Congress to enact it, Mississippi could appeal to the sister Sovereign States for exemption from ‘Protection.’ Their acquiescence would nullify it in Mississippi but leave it



operative in all the other Commonwealths. Should the sister states decline to grant the petition, with all the facts before them, then the law would remain operative in Mississippi, as in the other states. Thus you see, gentlemen, while I am a Nullificationist I am also a thorough-going and uncompromising Unionist. Oh, no, territorially I stand for addition, multiplication, enlargement, and not for division, withdrawal, or segregation, as I have told Mr. Calhoun many times."

"But suppose," persisted Lieutenant McClellan, "an Abolition Congress, backed by Abolition States, should, willy-nilly, by Statute and Constitutional Amendment, emancipate the slaves, and were to make slave-holding a felony; and upon the resistance of the South should send armies into the South to compel submission and obedience; and the South, enraged by what it would certainly regard as an unwarrantable infringement of their Constitutional rights, *were* to secede from the Union—what then?"

"This, Lieutenant McClellan, is an unimaginable hypothesis. You are putting up a man of straw for me to knock down. This vile brandy has gone to our heads." Colonel Davis was laughing, but his auditors were not.

"You are indulging in the craziest of conjectures," continued Colonel Davis. "Of course the Sovereign States have the right, under the Constitution, to withdraw from the Union, but no state will ever do it. An Abolition Congress could pass an Emancipation act but would never do it, for every member would know that such a law would be both unconstitutional and unenforceable."

"But suppose, *suppose*," broke in Captain Kearney, "an army of invasion should swoop down on you from the North!"

"An army of invasion, did you say?" Colonel Davis looked up sharply, his face suddenly flushing. "An army of

*invasion?* Then in the language of your true-blue Northerner, Tom Corwin, '*We will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves.*'

"But, gentlemen, you are only romancing. The fumes of this strong *aguardiente* have set our brains to weaving fantastic gruesome fancies. I am predominantly a Northerner: of Kentucky by birth, of New York by education, of New Jersey by marriage, of Massachusetts by nearest and dearest ties, of Pennsylvania as the former home of my father, of Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota by long years of arduous but happy service in the Federal Army. Many of my closest friends are non-slaveholding Northerners. We have a common possession, a priceless heritage: the most beautiful Flag, the most glorious Country, the wisest and noblest Constitution, and the humanest and most enlightened laws. Gentlemen," rising and holding his wine-glass, "I have the honor to propose this simple but heartfelt toast:

*"Pro Patria Nostra—For Our Country."*

As they passed out to the street Colonel Davis walked arm in arm with Captain Turney. They had been fellow-cadets at West Point, and had soldiered together in the North-West. Had they been brothers they could not have been fonder of each other.

"Any word yet, Captain?"

"None, Colonel."

Silently they wrung each others' hands and parted. No explanation was necessary.

## CHAPTER II

### UNIQUE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS. THE CULPEPPERS

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS, down to the War, was ardently loyal to the two Jeffersons—Thomas Jefferson and Jefferson Davis—and to the ideas and ideals of the South; and consequently was sharply differentiated from the northern half of the State.

Northern Illinois had been peopled from Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England—Southern Illinois from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas. This was startlingly noticeable during the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in '58, the Northern audiences going wild over Lincoln, the Southern almost deifying Douglas.

Agriculturally, educationally, and commercially the Northern section had the advantage. The best blood of the New-World renaissance, that already had won for Boston the title of the "Athens of America," that was making New York and Pennsylvania the commercial and industrial marvels of the New World, if not of the whole world, and that was destined to make Ohio a second "Mother of Presidents," had overflowed into Northern Illinois and begun the building of Chicago, the multiplying of railroads, the introduction of diversified manufactures, and the founding of famous institutions of learning and art.

It is idle to conjecture what would have been the result if the people of Southern Illinois had preëmpted Northern Illinois, and *vice versa*. The truth is, Ohioans, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders would not



have accepted Southern Illinois as a gift; and the early Southern Illinoisans, transplanted to the Lake, and to the Fox and Rock Rivers, would not have been equal to the task, with their caste-ideals and love of leisure, of building Chicago, and of making Northern Illinois what it has become.

This lack of strenuosity, economic and educational enterprise, and forgeforwardness was not a vice—it was a *calamity*! Southern climate and environment had enervated them, rendered them retrogressive and reactionary, and made them wholly unlike their Northern neighbors, who were hardy, persistent, toil-defying, book-devouring, ever-aspiring, boundlessly-enterprising advance couriers of conquest, commerce, civilization, and culture.

They were a defeated people, these early Southern Illinoisans. Like the Blacks, they had become a servile race. Indeed in the states whence they had come they had been “bested,” not only by the Whites but also by the Blacks. The “Nigger,” low-browed, grinning, fetich-worshiping, a mere chattel, was better clothed and housed and fed, in every way better off, than the despised “po’ white trash.” Under the Southern *regime* the Black Man had conquered these semi-derelict blue-eyed Anglo-Saxons and made them slothful, apathetic, superstitious, resigned to poverty and squalor, submissive to a thousand crude and comical practices, and—what many a Cæsar had failed to do—supplanted their language, the noblest and most virile in the world, and substituted therefor the most bizarre, ludicrous, grotesque, and unetymological lingo ever spoken since the Babel episode.

Thus landless, stranded, outcast, and enervated and dispirited by contact and competition with a servile race, they had come North and become encysted in Southern Illinois; by their opacity, denseness even, suggesting and compelling for themselves the fiercely-descriptive christen-

ing—"Egyptians." Charleston, South Carolina, and Jonesboro, Illinois, were equi-distant from Ottawa, where Lincoln and Douglas first met in that greatest oratorical joust and tournament in the history of forensic eloquence. Indeed Southern Illinois *was* Charleston, South Carolina—its uneducated, uncultured, unprogressive, uninfluential class—transplanted.

According to a strange but well-authenticated psychological law the exile always cherishes a passionate love and reverence for the land and institutions that have cruelly and unjustly rejected and ejected him, and made his life a heart-breaking and incessant tragedy. Every pagan captive, fugitive, battered remnant of human flotsam and jetsam, brought with him his own country and its institutions, beliefs and misbeliefs, to Rome.

So the people of Southern Illinois brought with them the spirit of the Slavocracy—also the vain dream that *they* were now to be the "Lords of the Manor;" that in their new home *they* would be as the "Masters" of the South.

But they had overlooked their limitations; that they lacked the learning, culture, industry, and enterprise that had always characterized the Southern Lords and Masters; that, despite all their hopes and dreams, they were "crackers" still; that they still spoke the "Nigger" lingo, believed and practiced his superstitions, and had no real passion for learning and progress, for literature and the fine arts; that the possession of certain sterling qualities had made the Southern Lords and Masters what they were—owners of vast estates and retinues of slaves, ornaments of Society, and honored occupants of the Bench, the Governor's Mansion, the Halls of Congress, and the White House at Washington—and that their lack of these sterling qualities had left *them* "crackers" still, "jes' po' white trash," as they were before their exodus.

Hence the "Egyptians" were rabidly pro-Southern, and fanatically anti-Negro. They hated the Black Man because they had been forced down to his level, and had been compelled to compete with him—*unsuccessfully*. And by claiming fellowship with the Ruling Class in the South they seemingly advanced their quality, and reestablished their Anglo-Saxon superiority and importance.

Nor was this assumption without its compensation. It enriched their spirit of hospitality, their chivalrous regard for woman, their awkward but sincere observance of social amenities, their readiness to lend a helping hand to the distressed, their increasing self-respect, their reverence for the rites of religion, their willingness to contribute, out of their meager means, to the support of the Church, their personal bravery, and their hot haste to call the slanderer to a severe accounting, all after the manner of the Southern baron whom, in personal contact, they had both envied and despised; but now, with that enchantment distance is said to lend, they had come to pattern after and revere.

Of course there were exceptions. A very few had brought with them all the vices and none of the virtues of both Master and Negro; on the other hand there were those whose learning and culture were unsurpassed; some were at once of the bluest blood and highest Southern connections yet conscientious Abolitionists; others were high-souled, valorous adventurers under the spell of the *wanderlust*; and yet others were ambitious young professional men.

Of all this state and condition Raleigh County, of which New Richmond was the county seat, was eminently typical. It was nowhere touched by any railroad, and hence was practically shut in from the world. Though the soil was poor there was plenty of timber, and many of the small streams abounded with fish, while wild game was abundant.



Their homes, usually near some stream, were built of logs, often unhewn, plastered with mud, covered with clapboards, and floored with puncheons. They rarely had more than three rooms, frequently only one—"cabins," such as the Masters in the South always provided for their slaves. There were few stoves, but little "boughten" furniture, no table linen, not many dishes and kitchen utensils, and none of the elegancies and luxuries of life. Children and dogs abounded, and were fed and housed with touching impartiality. What little stock they had was of the "scrub" variety; while wagons, harness, and farm implements were meager, inferior, and chronically dilapidated.

As the range was abundant but little stock was fed. Every farmer was his own butcher, "killing" but once a year, usually about Thanksgiving. The staple diet was "hog and hominy," corn-pone and sorghum molasses, varied with an occasional "mess of hog's-jaw and greens."

Every wife made her own soap, carded, spun and wove clothing for the entire family, exchanged eggs, and butter of her own making, for coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, spice, alspice, and "a bit of finery for the girls."

The people went barefoot nine months of the year and regarded coats, waistcoats, "biled" shirts, and neck and wrist adornments with high disdain; though it was permissible to oil the hair with bear-grease, and to wear, especially if "engaged," a ring hollowed-out from a button, shell, or copper or silver coin.

Of money there was next to none.

Almost everybody had chills and fever in the fall; but for this whiskey and quinine were a specific, and the death rate was low. There were no cases of "nerves," no gout, no anæmia or pyæmia, no "nervous prostrations," no angina pectoris, no diabetes, but little asthma and consumption, while the vermiform appendix was absolutely immune.

There were no "scarlet" women, no "bad" men, no wealth or actual want, no "plunging" or defalcations, and, for a whole generation, there was not a divorce sought, or illegitimate child born, or suicide or homicide, in Raleigh County.

Their principal amusements were weddings and "infair dinners," corn-huskings, apple-cuttings, log-rollings, house-raising, spelling-matches, singing-schools, kissing-parties, and dances—the fair Hebes and the gallant Adonises putting aside their "brogans" and dancing in their stockinged feet; as in going to church, always afoot, they carried their shoes and hosiery in their hands till they "neared" the church.

On two subjects they were always keenly alive, and eager for debate—Politics and Religion. Religiously, they were Baptists and Methodists, the Baptists slightly predominating in the country.

From early autumn till late in the spring every community was profoundly stirred by prolonged and strenuous "revivals."

The preachers were unlearned but tremendously in earnest. Often unable to read or write they nevertheless spoke with an authority and finality that would have awed and blanched the cheeks of the sternest and haughtiest of the Popes and Councils. They were orthodox to the core, and literalists even to the italicized words added by the translators.

Ignorance is always narrow and intense, and can easily be kindled to ferocity—so it was with these religionists. Denunciations of sister churches rang from pulpits, and sometimes, though not often, the brethren passed from verbal polemics to fisticuff encounters.

The Old Testament was the great textual storehouse, and the "terrors of the law" were their favorite and most potent themes. Awful instances of God's vengeance were related,

and sinners were exhorted to "come instantly" lest they drop into hell forever.

What wonder their trembling auditors had the "jerks," and "jumps," and "rickets," and "rigors," and went into "trances," and had "visions" at which they cried out in ecstasy or terror?

Often at midnight the ice in streams was cut for immersions, and converts were "buried with Christ in baptism," fearful that before dawn they might die unbaptized and thus be eternally lost.

It was all very wild and weird and dramatic: the dark forest, the glittering stars above, the snow-covered ice many inches thick, the rushing flood of gurgling water beneath, the fitful torches, the excited, shivering throng lining the banks, the loud exultant songs, the fearful but faith-sustained converts trembling on the brink, the stern unbending preacher boldly and unshrinkingly pushing his way through the rapidly-forming barriers of ice until he himself was more than half immersed—but it was profoundly impressive.

In the summer were held the great camp meetings, and the tide of holy fervor rose higher than ever. "Has he come through?" some one would ask. And a seraph-faced mother of Israel, kneeling beside the penitent at the altar, would clap her hands and exclaim, "Yes, yes, oh, yes!" Then the multitude would clap their hands and break forth, shouting and singing at the top of their voices:

"Sing on, pray on, we're a-gainin' groun',  
Oh, halle, hallelujah!  
The power of the Lord is a-comin' down,  
Oh, glory hallelujah!"

Four times a year the Methodist presiding elder, always a man of spiritual unction and power, came for a two or three days' assault on the "powers of darkness," and longer



if the signs were propitious. The "business" of the quarterly conference was purely incidental—the presiding elder's real business was *soul-saving*; and the presiding elder who could not report a score of souls saved at each quarterly meeting went away crestfallen, feeling that his visitation had been a heartbreaking failure.

Then finally once a year there were the great denominational roundups, "seasons of refreshing"—the Conferences and Associations. The bishopric was indeed an Apostolic office; nor was it sought and obtained by worldly methods. Those early bishops—wonderful men—were prayerfully chosen, "called," on account of their preëminent learning and spirituality, pulpit power and holy unction, men yet under the spell of Wesley's heavenly-mindedness and single-minded zeal for Christ and the lost, men whose lips were yet all aglow with the holy fire of Pentecost, and who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—and their anointed presence and heaven-inspired utterances at the Annual Conference always added glorious annals to the history of the Lord's onward and triumphant progress. And the Baptist presbyters numbered among their pulpiteers men who were not one whit less apostolic.

With the exception of probably a half-dozen New England Universalists and Unitarians—birds of passage blown thither by contrary winds from their true course—perhaps there was not an adult in Raleigh County, out of New Richmond, who had not at some time "experienced religion," and bowed to the obligations of a holy life.

New Richmond—population about 2,500—was a striking contrast to the county of which it was the capital. It claimed to be the "Athens of Southern Illinois," and none seriously disputed the claim. It boasted of having more elegant homes than any town of its size in the state, the politest society, more college graduates—there were an even

dozen—and, finally, the manliest men and the handsomest women in the world.

Of the twelve college graduates, five had traveled in Europe, and two in their callow youth had run away and fought with Jackson at New Orleans; later they had voted for him for president. More than a score of New Richmond men had marched and fought with Scott and Taylor in Mexico. Two young men had filibustered with Quitman in Cuba. One returned; in Havana the other knocked down a Spaniard for insulting the American flag, and was shot and killed by a drunken ruffian. One boasted of an ancestor who had signed the Declaration of Independence, "not far from the top"; and another's great-grandfather had been on Washington's staff when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

New Richmond had also furnished one governor, one state chief justice, one federal judge, one consul at Valparaiso, and four congressmen, each serving one term only.

Judge Edmund P. Gildersleeve had studied law in the office of the great John Marshall; and once, visiting in Washington, had been introduced to Daniel Webster. Professor Henry St. George Pinckney, a genuine bookworm of the *grub* variety, had studied the Romance languages under the poet Longfellow at Cambridge; and once, unforgettable day, saw Washington Irving ride by in a carriage. One Ezra Onstit claimed to have seen and shaken hands in 1825 with Lafayette; but as he was a horse trader and notorious liar, his claim was generally disallowed. Besides, his second cousin was known to be a Massachusetts Abolitionist, and even he, Ezra, was suspected of being a Whig.

This gathering of a truly remarkable group of families at New Richmond is easily accounted for—it was but a repetition of the history of Cambridge, and Concord, and Weimar, and Padua.

But New Richmond, with all its learning and culture, was profoundly religious. It was Southern, and, hence, could not be other than devout. Still the luridness of the country preaching, and literalness of interpretation, were less noticeable; and the congregations were by far less emotional. Everybody attended divine worship each Sabbath, Sunday School in the afternoon, and prayer meeting on Thursday evening. There were also many "sweeping revivals" in the New Richmond churches. Socially, "the latch-string was always on the outside," and it was not until long after the War that it was possible to maintain a decent hotel in New Richmond, for the reason that the citizens did all the entertaining of strangers in their homes, regarding the presence of a hotel as a reflection on their spirit of hospitality.

In politics, of course, they were Democrats. They were Southern to the core and could not be other than gentlemen and—Democrats. In 1856 not a Whig or Republican vote was cast in Raleigh County; and when, at a previous election, three votes had been cast for the Whig candidate for the presidency, the whole county felt it had been disgraced.

In the main, the people of New Richmond were not "crackers," or "po' white trash"; nor did they exhibit any of the hall-marks of the African race, save in a slight elision of the *r*, and an occasional dropping of the final *g*. Their residences, though comparatively small and inexpensive, were severely Colonial, with a frequent miniature Norman tower, Mansard roof, or glimpse of Spanish tile.

They swore picturesquely, though only under great provocation, and in the absence of the preacher, played an excellent game of poker, were past masters at concocting juleps and cocktails, were fond of a fine horse, did not object to a bit of horse racing at the County Fair, went to the circus once a year, were passionately fond of the theater, and at



Louisville, Nashville, New Orleans, Richmond, Baltimore, and Washington had seen the elder Booth, the elder Salvini, Forrest and other great actors; were familiar with and fond of quoting from the Bible and Shakespeare and the venerable classics, and were regular in church attendance. Many of them conducted family worship each morning, and in prayer meetings and class meetings weekly confessed their "sins of omission and of commission." Some of their worldly practices were wrong, possibly reprehensible; nevertheless they were at heart loyal to their church and religion, and were—we lift our hat to their memory—*Southern gentlemen*.

As in Shakespeare's dramas there are many characters, of many types and conditions, from the king to the king's fool, so at New Richmond there were "barristers, soldiers, artisans, merchants, men-servants, maid-servants, musicians, trumpeters, the town crier, and 'ye foole constable'"; but we are now speaking of the class that gave to New Richmond its character, social and political complexion, and enviable fame.

Perhaps New Richmond's most scholarly and picturesque citizen was Fairfax Culpepper, M. D., at once the leading physician, politician, *arbiter elegantiarum*, and defender and exemplar of the Southern Aristocracy. Tall, swarthy, long black hair, flashing dark-brown eyes, always faultlessly groomed, utterly fearless, a slight bullet-scar on the left cheek, the result of a "gentleman's affair of honah, suh," a University of Virginia and Heidelberg man, he was at once the pride and ornament of New Richmond.

Though inclined to be haughty and dictatorial, abrupt of speech and impatient of contradiction, his high character and great kindness of heart quickly soothed and healed the wounds made by his arrogant manner and utterances, and rendered his personal regard a prized possession. To be

recognized by Dr. Culpepper was considered an honor, and to be invited to The Elms as the command of Royalty.

An ancestor, a Stuart, of course, had been a trooper in Prince Rupert's cavalry; another had been with John Smith on the "Pocahontas Expedition," as the doctor picturesquely phrased it, and the doctor himself was said to have Indian blood in his veins.

As a gentleman of the old school, Dr. Culpepper insisted that the modern college is lax in both discipline and examinations; that the elective system is a damnable heresy; that no man can truly claim to be a genuine scholar without a thorough grounding in the Greek and Latin languages and literature, and that every gentleman should have both a vocation and an avocation; and, true to his theory, he had kept up, despite his widely scattered clientele as a general practitioner, his classical studies, Horace being his favorite author. "Horace," he said, "because he, of all the ancients, was the most human, the truest depicter of the desires, instincts, and pleasures of the average man, and the sanest and most ardent preacher and exemplar of the joy of living. Quoth Horace, 'Dispel the cold by freely piling the logs upon the hearth, and more liberally bring out, O Thaliarchus, the four-year-old wine from the Sabine jar. Leave the rest to the gods.'"

Mrs. Culpepper was a Lee, famed, in the social annals of Lexington, Kentucky, for her striking beauty, literary and linguistic attainments, and never-failing defense of the Southern *regime*. She was related to the Lees of Virginia, and, by marriage, was cousin to Jefferson Davis. There were two children: Harold, twenty-two years of age, and Virginia Lee, two years her brother's junior.

## CHAPTER III

### LOVE AND POLITICS—FAIR MARJORIE

JUDGE GILDERSLEEVE, I believe.”  
“Yes, sir. What can I do for you? Sit down, sir. Zed, stir up the fire!” This to a ruddy-faced lad with a rude shock of corn-tassel hair. “Mighty cold out. Come far? Better draw your chair up to the stove and warm your feet. Comfort before business,” with a low chuckle.

Judge Gildersleeve had a habit of carrying on a monologue when meeting strangers. It enabled him to study them without interruption.

“As I was saying, young man, what can I do for you?”

“I have no business, Judge Gildersleeve. I have called simply to pay my respects to you.”

“And why to *me*?”

“Because for years you have been at the head of the Southern Illinois Bar, and are now, I believe, the Presiding Judge.”

“What is your name, sir?”

“Samuel Simonson.”

“What!—son of Abe Simonson of Hawcreek Township? The biggest liar and sneak thief—I beg your pardon, sir. That isn’t possible?”

“Yes, sir, he is my father.” This with quiet dignity, though the color had risen to the roots of the young man’s hair.

“I beg your pardon, sir. You certainly don’t resemble your father. Indeed, I never knew that Abe Simonson had a son. Where do you work—got a trade?”



"I'm a lawyer, sir—or suppose I am. At least, I've been admitted to the bar, and have had some practice."

The Judge elevated his eyebrows. "Huh!" to himself, "a lawyer! Abe Simonson's son! Yet the youngster looks it, now that I take a square squint at him. Uncommonly fine head. Resembles Justice Marshall. Reminds me of the old Greek and Roman jurists, only younger. Nature does play some devilish pranks"—all the while drumming his fingertips on the table. Then aloud, "Where were you born, sir?"

"In Missouri, in 1832; or so my father says."

"And why the qualifying clause?"

"Because, sir, sometimes I seem to remember being somewhere else about the time I began to note things at St. Joseph, Missouri,—a dream-vision dissolving into rugged reality."

"Strange fancy. You must be a theosophist, a transmigratist."

"Oh, no, sir,—nothing so metaphysical as that."

The Judge felt in his pocket for a cigar. Finding none, he lighted his pipe, all the while keenly scrutinizing his young caller. "The ordinary Raleigh County youth would have been stumped by such terms as I have used, but this youngster—old Abe Simonson's son—disclaims being 'metaphysical.' Humph!" The Judge's mind was busy.

"You say you are a lawyer, Mr. Simonson; but how about your general education?—your——"

"Nothing to boast of, I assure you, Judge Gildersleeve. However, I'm a Harvard man, '53, and——"

"The hell—I beg your pardon, sir. You, old Abe Simonson's son, a Harvard man, great class of '53? Why, I remember——" The Judge paused. He "remembered" that in '53 he had sentenced Abe Simonson to the penitentiary for five years for horse stealing.

"And you graduated from Harvard?"

"Yes, sir," modestly. "I worked my way through."

"*Worked* your way through! I'm proud of you! Shake, young man, shake!" The Judge leaped to his feet and was extending his hand. "Dog my cats! I'm a Yale man myself, '27. Why, damn it—I beg your pardon, sir!—you warm the cockles of my heart. Sit down and tell me all about it."

"There's little to tell, Judge Gildersleeve. I was just a grub, that's all. I was too busy keeping up with my classes, and earning money to meet my expenses—tuition, books, and board—for anything else. In fact, but for the encouragement of Charlie Eliot, one of my classmates, I don't think I could have pulled through."

"Member of any of the frats? On the 'nine' or 'eleven'? How about the Cambridge *gals*?" The Judge's eyes were twinkling with good humor.

"As for the frats and sports, Judge, I was too busy shoveling snow and ashes for rich people, sawing wood, doing errands, and, toward the last, coaching sophs and freshies for their exams. As for the girls—ah, well, you know girls have no use for poor boys."

Just then there was a good-sized earthquake in the next room. The Judge exclaimed, "Damn that Zed!" and excused himself. There was a giggle, and a low-voiced colloquy that sounded like tender entreaty, followed by a mock-gruff refusal; presently the Judge returned.

"Your story interests me, Mr. Simonson. After your graduation at Harvard——?"

"Why, I spent a year in Europe."

"In *Europe*?" The Judge frowned, plainly incredulous, and half rose as if to end the interview.

"It was this way, Judge Gildersleeve: I got a job on a cattle-ship and worked my way over. The captain's brother had the European agency for Bumbold's Compound Extract of Fuchu, and through him—a Harvard man, as it happened,

'43—I got a place with one of his advertising gangs. Didn't like the job, but it gave me a chance to get outdoor exercise, make some money, and, incidentally, see Europe."

The explanation, brief and frank, pleased the Judge, and at once restored the *entente cordiale*.

"And—then?"

"Yes, once more back to dear old Harvard, invigorated, broadened, and with my whole year's salary in my pocket, for," he added with a smile, "you see, I worked my way back on another cattle-ship."

"Huh! Then?"

"Oh, there's little more to add—work and study, study and work, always with the dream of the final Commencement, and the day when I could begin an honorable career in a great and noble profession." The young lawyer's face was flushed, and there was a tremor in his voice.

"Did you ever see—*Daniel Webster*?"

"Yes, sir—and once I opened the door of his carriage. He spoke to me kindly, gave me his hand, and pronounced a blessing on me. He was very sorrowful. He had just made his Seventh of March Speech and it seemed that everybody had turned against him."

The Judge to himself: "And from Missouri—old Abe Simonson's son — Harvard man — attorney-at-law — noble man. Great God!"

Judge Edmund P. Gildersleeve was not an emotional man, but now he was moved deeply. His heart went out to the young lawyer. A Simonson, he thought, yet a nobleman; a thoroughbred sprung from basest stock; a stainless knight sired by a groveling knave. The Judge knew New Richmond's proud caste, its haughty exclusiveness. Why had this young man come to New Richmond to achieve fame and fortune? But it was not for him to question. For the young man it meant defeat at first, and social crucifixion.



He would be condemned without a hearing, ostracized. Simonson—the very word a hissing and a byword, a cruel sentence, an inflexible excommunication. “Yet he himself is innocent and I like him,” mused the Judge. “By the Eternal, I’ll help him, stand by him. So shall Culpepper, and Wilcox, and Pinckney, and all the rest. I’ll make it a personal matter. I don’t care anything about his politics or religion. I’ll try to forget his scoundrelly old father. He’s a brother college *alumnus*, and—he saw Daniel Webster, and actually shook hands with him. Besides, he’s a gentleman—I can’t be mistaken. He tells a straight story, doesn’t disown his scapegrace father, and isn’t ashamed of honest poverty. Yes, sir, I’ll stand by him and—I’ll see him through.”

“I cannot begin to tell you, Mr. Simonson,” arousing from his meditations, “how much I have enjoyed the narrative of your college experiences. Really, you have put me under obligations to you. But most of all do I appreciate your courtesy in calling on me and honoring me with your confidence. And now, as a slight compensation, I want you to be my guest tonight; and, as it is about supper time, we’d better be going.”

In vain the young lawyer strove to excuse himself, though at heart both proud and glad of his sudden access of good fortune, for he knew it meant much to be the invited guest of Judge Gildersleeve.

The introductions at The Maples were simple and informal, and supper was already on the table. There was another guest—Harold Culpepper, son of the Doctor. The young lawyer was seated next to Marjorie, the Judge’s only daughter; and opposite them were Mr. Culpepper and Marjorie’s brother Fred.

“Mother,” said the Judge, “Mr. Simonson has been renewing my youth this afternoon with an account of his college days and experiences.”



"Indeed!" replied Mrs. Gildersleeve; "and your *Alma Mater*, Mr. Simonson?" turning to her guest.

"Harvard, Madam." His voice was low and deferential.

"Then I suppose, sir, you are an Abolitionist, and swear by Garrison?"

It was young Culpepper, and there was a hint of a sneer in his voice. Judge Gildersleeve looked up sharply, half in rebuke; but Marjorie broke in:

"I'm sure, Harold, Mr. Simonson's politics do not concern us. You know what Professor Pinckney says."

"Yes—poor old Pink! By the way, he's another Harvard man," yet more ungraciously. "I half suspect he, too, has the Yankee infection."

The young lawyer smiled, and Marjorie suddenly became conscious of the rare yet rugged beauty of his face and head.

"Mr. Culpepper has a perfect right to inquire regarding my politics," he said, "and I'm only sorry I can't give him a decisive answer."

"Then you *are* an Abolitionist," affirmed young Culpepper. "I thought so the moment I saw you."

"Harold," broke in Marjorie again, "are *all* Abolitionists fine-looking, well educated, and cultivated gentlemen?"

The speech was wholly unexpected, therefore all the more effective. Plainly the situation was becoming uncomfortable for a certain aggressive and outspoken young man.

"I must disclaim both accusation and compliment," exclaimed the young lawyer, "the latter to my regret. As to politics, I am wholly unversed. I have been too busy to give heed to the criminations and recriminations of the politicians; besides, during my year abroad I knew nothing of what was going on in America."

"Then at least you're not an out-and-out Abolitionist?" It was the kindly voice of Mrs. Gildersleeve.

"Dear madam,"—and no priest could have spoken with

greater unction—"I can only claim to be a *patriot*. Political parties and religious sects alike confuse me. I believe in God, in the Saviour, that morality is the exalted poetry of life, and in the Immortality of the Soul—beyond this I cannot say. As to the counterclaims of Unitarian and Trinitarian, Baptist and Paedo-Baptist, Arminian and Calvinist, I am unable to render a verdict satisfactory even to myself. But may I not nevertheless claim to be a *religious man*—just as I love flowers, though unversed in botany, and as I adore the stars, God's flowers that gem the skies, though I know but little of astronomy?"

"Nobly said, young man, nobly said."

"I thank you, Judge Gildersleeve."

"And so you think you can dwell securely and serenely in the ethereal heights of Patriotism," pursued Harold, nettled by the Judge's approval of Simonson's speech, "and at the same time ignore all political parties, and continue deaf to your country's call."

"I did not say that, Mr. Culpepper. I said the clamor and counterclaims of parties confuse me—but that I am a patriot, ready to respond instantly to my country's call, I stoutly affirm."

"Good!" mockingly. "Then may I inquire which side is to be honored with your invaluable aid in the present crisis—the Tyrants of the North, or the true Patriots of the South?"

Judge Gildersleeve's face was flushed with deep anger. Though Harold was Marjorie's fiancé, and the son of his dearest friend, he had outraged the generous spirit of true hospitality. Raising his hand threateningly, "Stop, Harold! You shall not insult my guest, nor——"

"Please, Judge Gildersleeve," interrupted the young lawyer, "I do not think Mr. Culpepper meant any offense. If

I may be permitted a word more, I think we shall happily understand each other."

The young lawyer had spoken with a generous optimism, and was rewarded with a gladdening smile from Marjorie, which Harold noted.

"If it were a foreign foe to be combated, no true American would hesitate a moment; but this is a family feud, a domestic quarrel. I believe the men on both sides are equally honorable and patriotic."

"For shame, Judge Gildersleeve," said Harold, rising from the table. "I at least must resent this——"

"Sit down, Harold. I'm ashamed of you. Go on, Mr. Simonson."

"I have but little more to add, Judge Gildersleeve. I read Daniel Webster's Seventh of March Speech with deep emotion and said, 'There speaks the true patriot.' When Jefferson Davis came to Boston, two years ago, I managed to hear him. The great Caleb Cushing presided, and the illustrious Edward Everett graced the platform with his presence. As I listened to the learned and eloquent Mississippian, I said, 'There speaks the true American.' The speeches made at the two National Democratic Conventions, at Charleston and Baltimore, I read with the deepest sympathy and said, 'Patriots all, but too fiery and inflammable.' Many times in Boston I heard Wendell Phillips—an infernal machine set to music, some one called him—and William Lloyd Garrison. Always they saddened, sometimes angered, me; still honesty compelled me to say, 'Nevertheless they are patriots, but too morose, too bitter, too denunciatory.' Last winter at Cooper Institute, New York, I heard Abraham Lincoln and—and——"

"You fell down and worshipped him, declared him to be the greatest patriot of them all." It was Harold Culpepper, furious.



"No, Mr. Culpepper. Again you are in error. I did not fall down and worship him; nor did I apotheosize him as a patriot, though a great patriot he unquestionably is. But I did say, '*This is the broadest-visioned, the levelest-headed, and the kindest-hearted man I ever saw.*'"

Fortunately, at this juncture they were interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Culpepper, Professor Pinckney, Abner Wilcox, and a number of young people, and they all went into the parlor.

For a moment young Simonson was beside Marjorie. Shyly she took his hand, glancing quickly at the rest of the company to see she was not observed, and in a low voice said to him, "You are the noblest man I ever met, and a true gentleman." She paused a moment, a trifle confused, then added, "Papa believes in you, and so do I. You will not think me forward, will you? You were insulted at our table, and I want you to know that I am on—*on your side.*"

The young lawyer was surprised, but very happy. As waking from a dream, he suddenly realized that, for the first time in his life, he had been pierced by one of Cupid's arrows—that he was in love with the Judge's daughter, with Marjorie Gildersleeve. True, she was engaged to Harold Culpepper, but he could adore her in the distance.

However, he was not given time to soliloquize or rhapsodize. He must now meet Harold's father, and he dreaded the ordeal. Would he be catechized by father as he had been by son—only more severely? Were there yet more and sorer insults in store for him? But—and suddenly his face was luminous with happiness—"I know there's somebody on my side." Looking across the room, he saw "Somebody," and under his breath he murmured, "Marjorie!"

Opposite Marjorie, a handsome, imperious man, evidently Dr. Culpepper, was grasping Judge Gildersleeve's hand, and



booming: "‘*Acris hiems solvitur grata vice veris et Favoni, machinæ trahuntque siccæ carinas; nec prata albicant canis pruinis.*’"

"And you say, Judge, this youngster is the son of Abe Simonson? Then he's a villain!"

"To the contrary, Doctor, he's one of the finest young men I ever met. Besides, he's a Harvard man, both letters and law."

"Then, of course, he's an infernal Abolitionist. Thought so the moment I saw him."

"Wrong again, Doctor."

"What, a true patriot? Then let me shake his hand, and pledge him my friendship in a glass of wine. Quoth Horace: ‘*Nunc ego quæro mutare mitibus tristia, dum opprobriis, recantatis fias mihi amica reddasque animum.*’"

"Not so fast, good Doctor. He has gone through the fires of Boston Abolitionism; he also heard Lincoln at the Cooper Institute great meeting—and is yet undecided; for he also saw Daniel Webster, and has read his Seventh of March Speech. Likewise he saw and heard our Chieftain on his last visit to Boston. It is now for us to win him to our sacred Cause."

"And that we will do. Present me to him."

But there was little chance for conversation, as Marjorie soon bore the young lawyer away to present him to a number of her young friends. After that came dancing, and as dancing was not one of the accomplishments of the young disciple of Justinian, the two enjoyed a quiet *trte-à-tête* in

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<sup>1</sup> Severe winter is melting beneath the agreeable change of spring and the western breeze, and the windlasses are drawing down the dry vessels; nor are the meadows whitened with hoar frost.

<sup>2</sup> Now I am anxious to exchange bitter taunts for soothing strains, provided that my injurious expression being recanted, thou wilt become my friend and restore my peace of mind.

the unoccupied family sitting room. As soon as they were seated Marjorie said:

"I cannot tell you how much I regret Mr. Culpepper's treatment of you at supper."

"Oh, don't mention it, Miss Marjorie. To be perfectly frank, my heart fairly aches with gratitude to him for it."

Marjorie started with surprise, then laughed softly. The glow of the old-fashioned fireplace caused her rich masses of dark auburn hair to gleam like a glorified halo. Ten shapely digits, folded gracefully on her lap, proclaimed the beauty—the wonderful beauty—of her hands. Dimples in her cheeks and chin seemed to coquette with each other, innocently declaring what exquisite receptacles they would be for kisses. Her eyes—they reminded him of a pair of eyes in the *Palazza Farnesina*, painted by Raphael. Yet laughing:

"And pray, Mr. Simonson, why are you thankful for Mr. Culpepper's dastardly conduct?"

"Because to that I am indebted for the great happiness of the present moment, and the thrill I felt when you promised always to be on my side."

Marjorie suddenly sobered. Perhaps her sympathy had carried her too far. It came to her that she was dealing with a masterful man. She thought of a lion—yes, he was a lion, now in sportive mood; but once *aroused*—but she liked him. He was quieter than Harold, yet stronger; she felt it. She marked his strong jaw, firm chin, glowing eyes. Once angered, or in—*love*. His low, purring voice when replying to Harold's taunts she remembered and—trembled. She awoke to the fact that she was afraid of him—yet she didn't want him to leave her. He was so restful and sensible, evidently honest and strong—she hoped no one would interrupt them, not even Harold. *Harold*—she paled, and into her eyes came a hunted look. She had forgotten to respond to her guest's gallant speech. She heard him, seemingly in

the distance, addressing her again. Without waiting to catch the drift of his speech, she looked up and said:

"Oh, Mr. Simonson, you must not take me too literally." She tried to laugh, but in her voice there was a suggestion of tears.

"I understand you now," he said, gravely, "and beg your pardon. I'm sorry I took you too seriously a moment ago. I thought you were in earnest. I did not dream you were jesting. Again I crave your pardon. I guess I'd better be going."

"No, no, Mr. Simonson. Please do not go—yet. You *must* understand me. I *did* mean what I said. I like you, as I see Papa and Mama and Fred do. I'm sure you are worthy and—and that we shall learn to like you more and more. And—and," extending her hand, "believe me, I *shall* always be on your side."

Reverently he bowed and kissed her hand, an act of homage witnessed by a pair of eyes, sparkling with jealousy, in the adjoining room.

"I thank you from the depths of my heart, Miss Marjorie—that is all I can say."

"That's all a manly man needs to say, Mr. Simonson," and her eyes gave him gracious assurance.

After a little desultory conversation, he remarked: "I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your father's invitation to——"

"But Papa didn't invite you, Mr. Simonson."

"He didn't! Then who did?"

"Why—I did."

"How—where?" mystified.

"Now you *will* be angry with me, Mr. Simonson, and denounce me as an eavesdropper, but really I couldn't help myself. It was this way: When you came into Papa's office—and how could I have known *you* were coming?"—



with a merry twinkle in her eyes—"I was in Papa's den, looking over some new books and prints. You came, and I thought—well, you know, Papa and I have no secrets. But when Papa began quizzing you so dreadfully, I did try to get out. But the hall door was locked and—and *I just couldn't crawl through the transom*. And then I—I fell and——"

"But I thought it was Zed, the office boy. Your father——"

"Yes, I know—but he had forgotten that I was in the consultation room, and when I came down like an earthquake he rushed in, angry at the interruption, and naturally shouted 'Zed!' Didn't you hear me giggle? Oh, but Papa was angry, but I soon pacified him. Then I told him he *must* invite you to The Maples to supper, and to stay all night."

"But why, Miss Marjorie? I presume I'm stupid, but really I can't see the connection."

"Why, Mr. Simonson, I'd heard so much of your story, and what a struggle you'd had, and how wonderfully you'd succeeded, and at first I was so sorry for you; and then when I heard you tell all about Harvard, and Boston, and Europe, and—Daniel Webster," deliciously mimicking the dear old Pater, "I was that proud of you—that is, of your success, past and prospective—I told Papa that if he didn't invite you, though you were a stranger, and the—the—well, knew no one in New Richmond, I just wouldn't be his little girl any more. Didn't you hear us fussing and *fussing* scandalously?"

"And after hearing all about me, from my own lips, my pedigree and station, you were willing to meet me?"

He was very pale, his lips drawn and quivering, his eyes sunken and ghastly. That this queenly maiden, the only woman whose spell he had ever felt, whose magnetic charm for the first time had brought to life in him the unutterable primal mate-passion, whose first look had marked an inde-



structible epoch in his life, that *she* should know his family, his ancestry, unnerved him, immeasurably saddened him.

Marjorie now was more frightened than ever and again realized that she was dealing with a new type of man. When she had begun her confession of eavesdropping she had forgotten who his father was.

"Ah, here you are, you two runaways! Why aren't you dancing?"

"Mr. Simonson doesn't dance, Papa, and I didn't care to; so, to 'escape death and sudden destruction,' according to the Prayer Book, we came in here. And now I shall leave you gentlemen to your glory and—*tobacco*," with a smiling grimace. The gentlemen bowed—ah, that rare old Southern chivalry!—as Marjorie swept out, flinging her father a kiss.

Judge Gildersleeve introduced several of his friends: Prof. Henry St. George Pinckney, Voe Bijaw, editor of *The Cackler*; Hiram Goldbeck, the leading banker; Uncle Joel Race, proprietor of the Hub; Rector Henry Lee Frothingay, of Gethsemane Church, and the Reverend Webster Beach, shepherd of the Methodist flock.

But the "impromptu" party soon broke up. As Dr. Culpepper departed, he looked the young lawyer keenly in the eyes and said, "I'll see you again very soon, sir."

At another door, apart from the other guests, Harold was saying, "I don't see, Marjorie, how you can bear old Abe Simonson's son."

"He seems to be a perfect gentleman, Harold. Some sons, you know, are better than their parents."

Harold winced. Amsden Armentrout, the blacksmith, once had hinted that Harold Culpepper was no credit to his parents. As soon as the news had reached The Elms, Harold, in a towering rage, had promptly sallied forth and

provoked a disgraceful altercation with the heat-tanned son of Vulcan.

"But, Marjorie, he's such a greenhorn. He's not at all like our people."

"So much the worse for our people, perhaps," with a saucy tilt of her chin. "Besides, he's a Harvard man, has spent a year in Europe, and is now a fine lawyer. Why, Harold, I know young men right here in New Richmond, well born and gently bred, who have enjoyed every advantage, and yet have made no such record." Another home thrust.

"But don't you see," growing angry, "he's a pesky Abolitionist? He as good as said so, Marjorie."

"To the contrary, he said he was *not* an Abolitionist, and I believe him. But what though he is—isn't that his privilege? You forget, Harold, that Emerson and Bryant and Whittier and Longfellow are Abolitionists—good men, great men, patriots. I admire Mr. Simonson for his liberality and open-mindedness."

"Then marry him and be—damned!" Harold was in a white fury, but instantly repented. "Forgive me, Marjorie! Believe me, I didn't mean it."

"I might do worse than marry Mr. Simonson, for he is a gentleman and would never—of this I am sure—forfeit my respect. And as for being 'damned' by marrying him, I might marry somebody else and suffer a worse damnation. Good-night, Harold, and—*the pleasure of your reflections!*"

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSPIRACY—THE DREADED PROVOST-MARSHAL

THE "impromptu" party at Judge Gildersleeve's had been carefully planned by the suddenly alarmed Culpeppers.

Since the November election the air had been electrical with excitement, all culminating in the portentous inauguration of Jefferson Davis, at Montgomery, Alabama, the day prior to the young lawyer's arrival at New Richmond.

With accounts of the Montgomery inauguration, altogether reliable, came many rumors quite as unreliable: that both Lincoln and Davis had been assassinated; that neither Lincoln nor Davis had been assassinated, but that Davis was dauntless, while Lincoln had weakened, and was being guarded by Abolitionists to prevent him from "taking to his heels"—and, accordingly, the Republicans were gloomy and dispirited, while the Democrats were bold, aggressive, and jubilant.

On Inauguration Day evening, Dr. and Mrs. Culpepper had given a reception in honor of the elevation of Mrs. Culpepper's cousin to the presidency of the Confederate States of America; and until a late hour The Elms had been thronged with the *elite* of New Richmond's Southern aristocracy. Much wine was consumed, and many cigars were smoked. That the South eventually would triumph was a foregone conclusion.

"Let us be brave and outspoken in the North, as are our brethren in the South, and in a few weeks the Negro-



worshipping Abolitionists will be cringing at our feet. The South is invincible. Even if the South were eliminated, we Southerners in the North could smite the Abolitionists hip and thigh, and win the day." Thus Dr. Culpepper had spoken, and his speech had been received with prolonged applause.

But the following morning, when the verbal wine, and the wine that was red, had lost their potency, the outlook was not so roseate.

Word came that, contrary to expectations, Davis' inauguration had greatly angered and united the North; that tens of thousands of Democrats were declaring themselves ready to fight for the Union; that Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland were not marching into the Confederacy's fold; that Logan—of all men—was fiercely rallying the clans of Southern Illinois to the defense of the Old Flag; that Douglas, their own "Little Giant," had proffered his sympathy and support to Lincoln; that German, Irish, and Scandinavian papers everywhere were publishing broadsides of denunciation of the South, and appeals to their compatriots to rally to the support of Lincoln, Liberty, and the Union; that the entire diplomatic corps at Washington was noncommittal, or openly hostile to the Southern Confederacy; that every Northern governor had telegraphed his unswerving support to Mr. Lincoln; that all armories and arsenals were being ransacked for munitions of war, and that in all the Northern states the local militia was being armed and drilled; that provost-marshals were being multiplied and clothed with unlimited authority, and that one of them, Mike Murphy, formerly a Chicago policeman and ex-thug, had been ordered to New Richmond; and finally, that Lincoln himself, instead of being dispirited and frightened by the event at Montgomery the day before, had actually become fearless and outspoken, and had declared he would immediately make a



speech-making tour of the Northern cities while *en route* to Washington.

About noon it was noised abroad that the Federal Government already had a secret agent in New Richmond, "maliciously and gleefully marking those who were designed for the slaughter." Indeed, it was whispered that one of these "minions of the tyrannical government at Washington" had managed to be present at the reception the night before at The Elms.

All these rumors of the forenoon were disquieting enough, and rumors never lose anything by repetition, but in the afternoon there came a postscriptial rumor to the effect that Federal troops were being hurried from St. Louis to New Richmond, and would be quartered in the Court House square before morning.

But to the Culpeppers something more alarming had happened—a letter that might justify serious charges had been lost.

Mrs. Culpepper, an amiable and accomplished lady, an *alumna* of the École de l'Etoile in Paris, had always been very close to her cousin, now president of the Confederate States of America. Ever since his departure from Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to enter West Point, they had corresponded; and when he had returned from time to time to visit friends and relatives, he had always stopped at her father's house. Finally she had married the brilliant Fairfax Culpepper M. D., and gone with him to Southern Illinois, while her gifted cousin had risen step by step to a place of renown in the army, in Congress, in the President's Cabinet, and finally, as the political and spiritual successor of John C. Calhoun, to the leadership of the South. As the stress of feeling between the two sections had increased, their correspondence had taken on new life and vigor; and when he

had been elected to the presidency of the new government, she had promptly congratulated him, and asked his advice as to how she could best promote the Cause so dear and sacred. To this letter Mr. Davis, in fullest confidence, had made the following reply:

"My Dear Charlotte: Salutations to all of the House of Culpepper, and a thousand good wishes!

"These are indeed, as you say, parlous times; but be of good cheer, because ours is a righteous Cause and cannot fail of success. Trials we shall have, many of them, and—*war*—though Toombs and Rhett and Quitman are contrary-minded. The Northerners will not run like sheep, as even you, dear Charlotte, seem to think—they will fight like *lions*, and they will fight to a *finish*! I have known them too long, and too intimately, at West Point, at Washington, in Mexico, in Northern Illinois, Northern Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, to be mistaken; and I know of what stern stuff they are made—and how doggedly they will persevere. It will be a long struggle and a hard struggle—but of the final outcome I have no doubt.

"You ask me to advise you as to how you, and other friends in the North, can best aid the Southern Confederacy. This is a delicate thing for me to do, for above all things do I hate *treason*; and though several states in their sovereign capacity have absolved their citizens from allegiance to the Government of the United States, yours is not among them—hence, unless your government should *declare an unholy war* against our government, it would be wrong—*sinful*—for you to pursue a course that would be inimical to your government, and even more reprehensible for *me* to advise, or even countenance, such action.

"However, in the event of *war*, as now threatened, all would be changed, especially for me; as to what course *you* should pursue, in that lamentable event, you must look to your Maker and your own conscience for guidance.

"What I write, therefore, is conditional upon the dictates of your own conscience, and is strictly confidential.

"I. Be *conciliatory*. Our Cause needs friends. Whom the gods would destroy they first make *mad*. Yield not to

angry passions. Suffer not the Abolitionists to provoke you to wrath. They are hot-headed—keep your heads cool! Speak gently, remembering that ‘a soft answer turneth away wrath.’ We are on probation, as the Methodists say—let’s give a good account of ourselves. We are charged with ‘spoiling for a *fight*.’ Let us prove that our constant yearning is for peace!

“2. Be *diplomatic*. This is no time for ‘shirt-sleeves diplomacy.’ Above all, avoid all arguments and heated discussions.

“3. Talk *patriotism*, emphasizing the truth that ‘treason’ is a word all honorable Americans abhor. Allow that the most vitriolic Abolitionists are true patriots—for *such they are*. Claim for us—even our Toombses, our Rhettsses, our Pryors, our Yanceys—intemperate as the most violent Abolitionists—the same thing; for I hold that we all, whether under the one or the other flag, whether giving allegiance to the one or the other government, and despite all our unhappy disagreements, nevertheless are true Anglo-Saxons, true Americans, and *true patriots*. Instantly yield everything to our adversaries that our adversaries demand of us—courtesy, toleration, willingness to listen to Reason’s utmost syllable and punctuation mark. Even more; meet insult with courtesy, cruelty with kindness, misrepresentation with astonishing forbearance, and boorishness with the high valor of gentle breeding.

“4. Do not wantonly denounce Mr. Lincoln, or apply to him opprobrious epithets. Entirely apart from all constitutional questions, or questions relating to ethics or political economy, you must see that he holds the hearts of the yeomanry of the North in the hollow of his hand. Do not assail his manners, habits, tastes, or personality, for, despite his gawkerie and uncouthness, he is singularly winsome and appealing. We all disagree with him; we feel that unwittingly he cruelly misrepresents us; we are convinced that the triumph of his policy and principles would mean the destruction of all that Washington, Jefferson, and Madison held sacred; nevertheless, dear Charlotte, always remember that Mr. Lincoln is of Virginia stock, like ourselves a Kentuckian, at heart the soul of gentleness, at times seems to be



almost inspired; and that of all Northerners he is the wisest, shrewdest, most diplomatic, and will be the hardest to win over or defeat. Every jest at Mr. Lincoln's expense will win for *him* armies of friends; every denunciation of him will win for *us* armies of enemies."

There was a postscript, written some days later, in which Mr. Davis said:

"War, dearest cousin, is inevitable. Our people are beside themselves with rage and fury. Your Abolitionists have no monopoly of unreason. Toombs, Pollard, Pryor, Rhett, Walker, Wigfall, Yancey, Mason, even the erstwhile lamb-like Stephens, are unquenchable firebrands, spreading the perilous conflagration in all directions. In vain I have counseled against war; that if we fight it must be only in self-defense; that if we take up arms it must be only to repel *invasion*—in vain are all our pleadings. Indeed I, even I, am looked on with suspicion, and my courage and loyalty to the South are called in question. Great God, cousin! My situation is almost unendurable, and in my secret heart I wish I were well rid of it all. Of only one thing am I certain—*war is inevitable!*

"I am therefore dispatching secret agents to the North—principally to Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. One of them, a young gentleman of wealth, culture, and the highest integrity, I am sending to New Richmond. His mission is to arouse and unify all lovers of the South in Southern Illinois; to organize them into secret leagues or lodges that shall meet from time to time to receive communications from me, and instruction in the manual of arms; to secretly enlist Northern men for service in our armies; to dissuade Northern men from enlisting in the Federal army; to magnify and give currency to all mistakes and outrages committed by the agents of the Federal Government, so as to weaken as much as possible the power at Washington; to refute the slanders of our enemies, and to rightfully state and interpret our acts, utterances, and purposes; and, in fine, *to sow dissension in the very citadel of our enemies.*



"I thank God every day for such loyal and loving hearts as yours and Fairfax's.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"JEFFERSON DAVIS."

This was the letter that had been lost.

When the disquieting news of the anger of the North had come the day before, the Culpeppers naturally were very much wrought up. It is no aspersion of their courage to say that they were profoundly agitated. Uncertainty sometimes causes the bravest to tremble. Occasionally imagination "makes cowards of us all." If a United States Marshal were *en route* to New Richmond, and Federal troops a-march, the first tragic note of War's horrible overture might be sounded on Northern territory—even in New Richmond. And what more natural than that the vengeance of the North should be visited upon the kindred of the Head of the hated Southern Confederacy?

"Oh, if Cousin Jeff's envoy were only here!" exclaimed Mrs. Culpepper. "There's none to advise us; no one cares what becomes of us. Only last night The Elms was thronged; to-day we're deserted. It's now almost noon and we've not had a caller. Fair-weather friends! Patriots—in *hiding*! Heroes in—*retreat*! Where's Judge Gildersleeve? I half suspect he's a turn-coat, and is secretly in league with the Abolitionists. And Professor Pinckney? Yes, our *St. George*! And the valorous Voe Bijaw, with his roaring editorial 'WE'! And——"

"Hush, Charlotte," said the good Doctor, soothingly. Quoth Horace: *"O navis, novi fluctus referent in mare. O quid agis? Fortiter occupa portum. Nonne vides ut nudum latus remigio."* Where's Cousin Jeff's letter? Let's read it again."

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\* O ship! new billows are bearing thee back into the deep. Oh! what art thou doing? Resolutely seize the haven. Dost thou not see how bare thy side is of oars?

Then was the discovery made that the letter had been lost, or —*stolen*.

Later in the day, a stranger had arrived, the sole passenger in the Enochsburg stage, and put up at the "City Hotel"; and as he had engaged board and lodging by the week, he had not registered; but the proprietor said his name was "Samuel Simonson," and that he was a lawyer.

"Who is he, Nic?" asked Harold Culpepper.

"Oh, Ah dunno. Some durned Yank. W'y, Hah'ld, w'at's thuh mattuh? Yuh's w'ite ez uh sheet."

"Oh, nothing, Nic. Up pretty late last night. A little too much liquor, maybe. How do you know he's a Yankee?"

"Didn't yer heah hiz gab? 'Ah'd *rahther* have a quiet room, please. Ah *cahn't* imagine a finer site for a city,'" making a comical grimace.

"Nic, maybe he's the Provost Marshal."

"Huh! Gosh!—d'yer raickun? But Ah'll keep muh lantuhns on thut roostuh."

"Wish you would, Nic. And if you learn anything, let me know."

"Roight Ah wull," proud to be recognized by a Culpepper.

But Nic's services were not needed. In less than an hour everybody knew that Samuel Simonson was at the City Hotel; and many took it for granted that he was Mike Murphy, ex-police thug of Chicago, and newly appointed United States Marshal. Nor did his brogueless speech in the least lessen their conviction.

Hence the young lawyer's call on Judge Gildersleeve in the afternoon created a sensation. At first it was rumored that he had arrested the Judge; then Zed, the Judge's factotum, reported that the Judge and the stranger were having a heart-to-heart talk on politics.

"An' hain't he 'rested th' Jedge yit?"

"Nuh! Jis' seem lak brudders."

This looked bad, and a good many shook their heads. The "Jedge's lil'ty t' th' Cause" was gravely questioned.

Later, when it was learned that the Judge had taken the "United States Marshal" home with him, the wiseacres wagged their heads.

When Harold Culpepper took the news to The Elms there was consternation. Mrs. Culpepper was more than ever convinced of the Judge's disloyalty, and even the Doctor confessed that "it looked mighty bad."

"What are you going to do, Father?"

"What do you advise, Harold?" The Doctor was proud of his son, and liked to defer to him.

"What do *you* say, Mother?"

"Say on, Son. Your father isn't quite himself to-day," with a beaming smile for both husband and son.

"Well, here's my plan: I'll go down to the Judge's at once. I met Marjorie on the street this afternoon and she was unusually gracious; I doubt not I shall be welcomed to supper at The Maples. I'll go right down and beard the lion in his den. If he is really the Provost Marshal, I'll draw his fire. If he gets the drop on me, and the Judge doesn't play up, more than likely I'll be put under arrest. By the way, that wouldn't be bad. 'Twould clear up the atmosphere and end this pesky uncertainty; too, it would compel folks to take sides and show who are our real, dependable friends. Then after supper, if you hear no gun-play, and get no word from me, gather a company of our friends and call, informally, at The Maples. Then—well, after that let matters shape themselves. What do you say, Father?"

"Capital!"

"Sister?"



"Fine!" with a little grimace. "Quoth Horace: '\*O Venus, Regina Novae Richmondi, fervidus futuro sposo et gratiae nymphaeque zonis solutis properentque tecum.' Is this just a little scheme of yours, brother dear, to work in an extra evening with the fair Marjorie? Or is my brother just a wee bit jealous of the 'damned Yankee'? *Wow!*" And she beat a precipitate retreat.

"Mother?"

"You can always be trusted, Harold. But are you sure there's no danger?"

This conversation explains the "impromptu" party at The Maples, as already recorded, Harold Culpepper arriving just before the supper hour, and the other "guests" a little later.

In the meantime the Jefferson Davis letter had been *found*, and mailed to Amsden Armentrout, the blacksmith.

Armentrout was both unique and *sui generis*. He was destitute of book-lore, but rich with the lore of life; spoke a hopeless blend of the rudest Scotch dialect and the current lingo, yet occasionally rose to astonishing heights of eloquence; in action was as fierce and tempestuous as Goth or Vandal, but at heart was the quintessence of gentleness and generosity; chivalrous toward women as the Gracchi were to their mother, as Brutus was to his wife, but always studiously avoided them. Withal he was an uncompromising Abolitionist, and the sworn enemy of the Southern aristocracy. Born and reared a "cracker" in East Tennessee; first a Whig and then a Republican; always fearless and outspoken; an ardent follower of Lincoln—the ultra-Southerners held him in fierce detestation. Could they have done so they would have driven him from town and county. But old Amsden was immovable—a bachelor, law-abiding, hard-

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\* O Venus, Queen of New Richmond, let thy glowing fiancé and the graces and nymphs with their girdles loosened hasten along with thee.



working, veteran of the Mexican war, always and in everything the soul of honor, profane, yet in a manner pious with a decided "leanin' t'wurd" the Presbyterian Church, then just organized in New Richmond, and he had all the sterling qualities of the sturdy Scots.

The letter read a second time, and its purport thoroughly digested, Amsden immediately took action. It was then almost sundown but, he reflected, the early February nights were long. However, time was precious. A messenger was sent to summons John R. Noss, a farmer living four miles from town on the Postville road. Noss was a young man of the highest integrity, of more than average ability, well-connected, a fluent speaker, a stranger to fear, an open Abolitionist and original Lincoln man and, what Amsden liked, was always ready to act "at the drop of a hat." Several others also were summoned, among them Cornelius Blavey—slight, short of stature, always a perfect gentleman, brave as a lion, loyal to the core, destined to become "General Blavey," sometimes impetuous, a man after Amsden's own heart. Armentrout lived, moved and had his being in a room partitioned off in the rear of his shop; and it was there they were to meet.

Thus while Dr. Culpepper was confiding to Judge Gildersleeve and others the contents of the Davis letter, and the fact that it had been lost, and the young lawyer and Marjorie were enjoying themselves tête-à-tête, and Harold, surprised and discomfited by his fiancée's conduct, was being left to twiddle his fingers, Amsden Armentrout was laying before his fellow-Abolitionists the letter, bearing the New Richmond postmark, which had come to him, anonymously, through the mail.

"Who's Samuel Simonson," and "Wait for developments," were the themes and watchwords of both meetings.

Dr. Culpepper and his friends were more than half per-

suaded that "Samuel Simonson" was an *alias*, and that he was the threatened United States marshal; at the same time Armentrout, with far better grounds for his faith, had made up his mind that the aforesaid young man was the promised emissary of Jefferson Davis.

An eavesdropper, hearing only the words emphasized, could not have distinguished the one meeting from the other. "Mum," "we must not be precipitate," "wait till they show their hands," "traitor," "patriot," "officer," "persecution," "outrage," "spy," "incognito," "snap judgment," "stretch hemp," "provost-marshal," "dead men tell no tales," "no time to be squeamish"—verbally, phraseologically, and in spirit, the meetings were identical; but in all else they were as nadir and zenith, as capricorn and cancer, as the solstices of summer and winter.

Were thoughts telepathetically communicated Simonson would have been too distracted to have engaged in psychic joust with the Judge's daughter; and did ears burn when their owners are talked about his ears would have been incinerated, and there would have been no raptured tympanum to thrill at the dainty tappings of Marjorie's gracious words.

But the meeting at Judge Gildersleeve's was by far the more anxious. An implicating letter, from their view point both innocently written and received, had been lost—but how would the Abolitionists regard it in the not unlikely event of its falling into their hands? There could be but one answer—*treason*. Dr. Culpepper was a brave man, none braver ever lived, but his face was ashen and his voice was tremulous as, looking from face to face as if for sympathy, he said, "Already perhaps I and my family are being proclaimed outlaws, aiders and abettors of treason; tomorrow we may be haled to judgment and a felon's cell; after that——" The sentence remained unfinished.

"And yet I love my country," he presently resumed, "as I love my life. It is the land of my fathers. My kinsmen have fought in every war that has been waged for its preservation; and in every war some of my kinsmen have laid down their lives. In my sacred archives are three commissions, signed by Washington, Jackson, and Taylor, my great-grandfather, grandfather, and father being thus honored. Slavery? I hate it. You gentlemen know that ten years ago, back in Kentucky, I freed my slaves—without compensation. Yesterday I told Harold to take down the Stars and Stripes that Charlotte always keeps draped about the picture of the great Culpepper, my great-grandfather. I had been reading the speeches of Lincoln and Seward, and a vicious editorial by Horace Greeley, vilely aspersing and misrepresenting our people; and I felt that their flag could no longer be my flag. But when Harold said, holding it in his hand, 'What shall I do with it, father? Throw it in the fire?' my eyes were suddenly dim with tears; and I caught it up, lifted it to my lips, and kissed it again and again. Yes, and I'm not ashamed to confess it. And I said, 'No, Harold; fold it up gently and lay it away. Some day reason and tolerance may return to my countrymen and once more we can proudly unfold it to receive the kisses of the wind, and the benediction of the skies. For it has a great and glorious history and I love it, love it, even as I love my life.' Nor do Lincoln and Seward and Greeley love this glorious Republic one whit more than I do—and the Lees and Johnsons and Jackson and Alexander Stephens. But they cruelly lock the door of exit, wisely and magnanimously left open by our fathers, and now tauntingly declare we shall not depart. More: because we wish to avail ourselves of our inalienable Constitutional right, openly proclaimed by our fathers and never before denied or called in question, we are stigmatized as wreckers of the Consti-

tution, and as traitors to our country. However, we will practice patience and pray to the God of our Fathers for deliverance. Quoth Horace, \*'Durum, sed quidquid est nefas corrigere fit levius patientia.'"

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\* It is hard, but whatever is impossible to rectify becomes more supportable by patience.



## CHAPTER V

THE DAVIS EMISSARY. VIRGINIA LEE CULPEPPER

IN the meantime Jefferson Davis' emissary had arrived, incognito.

He had planned to assume the rôle of a bluff, opulent, convivial New Yorker, representing a mysterious railroad syndicate. The idea was exceedingly well conceived as the people of Raleigh County had long desired a railroad from St. Louis to New Richmond, and thence, by converging lines, to Louisville, and Evansville, or Cincinnati, the latter preferred. Hence a capitalist, or a representative of capitalists, would be certain of a hearty welcome, regardless of politics or party affiliations, and the most generous assistance in studying the topography and resources of the surrounding country. This rôle would also have accounted for his easy *camaraderie* with the Culpeppers, Gildersleeves, Goldbecks, and other Southern families, as they were the largest landowners and wealthiest people in that part of the state.

But at Enochsburg he had heard of the lost Davis letter and at once saw that this plan would not be feasible. To pose as a rich man, and openly be on intimate terms with Davis' cousin and her aristocratic *coterie* would now, under the changed conditions, arouse suspicion.

Happily for him, and the hazardous mission he was on, he was not only a gentleman of culture but, also, a resourceful actor. Born in New Orleans, boasting the blood of Raoul Innerarity and of Jules St. Ange, christened Fuentes

Fontennette by his parents, but to be known in this narrative by his self-chosen pseudonym, Felix Palfrey, educated in the New Orleans Jesuit College and at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, skilled with sword and firearms, brave and self-possessed, fine looking and with a certain air of distinction, and blest with an abundance of worldly goods, President Davis could not have chosen a better representative.

"And so, my lad," he said to himself, "you're not to be an opulent railroad promoter but—what then?" He was plunged in deep thought, perplexed, brow-wrinkled. Presently his face lighted up. "I have it. I'll throw everybody off his guard, even the Culpeppers, till I've taken my reckoning. I'll pose as a teacher of music and languages—poor, of course. Let's see, French, Spanish, and Italian—and the piano. But my *patois*, for my English must be broken, is mainly Creole—though a little of everything. Can I evade suspicion? I *must*! As to my playing on the piano"—he was shrugging his shoulders now like the true Latin—"oui, oui! ah, non! assurément, bud nud zo ver', ah, bueno. Zee graid teach-*aire* he nud play zo ver' mooch. 'E 'ah've nud zee—ah, el tiempo to brac-*teez*." He broke into a merry laugh.

And so, "zee, ah, nuoves teach-*aire* oov moo-*zik* an' lang-*widge*" came to New Richmond unheralded, unmet, unwelcomed, and struggling terribly "veez yo' zo ver' strenge lang-*widge*." In New Orleans such a variegated *patois*, such a hurdy-gurdy of Gallic *potpourri*, would have excited shrieks of laughter—and none would have laughed more heartily than a certain Felix Palfrey, "zee teach-*aire*."

The selection of this rôle proved to be a stroke of genius. Only a New Orleans Creole—at once a gentleman, man of the world, linguist, and master of an amazingly kaleidoscopic *patois*—could have played the part.

Felix Palfrey was apparently so guileless, so unaffected,

so unsophisticated, so eager to please, so utterly absorbed in "moo-*zik* an' zee lang-*widge*," he was immensely appealing. His ignorance of what was going on in the world—"I cann' r-read zee Ingles pa-*paire*' so ver' gud"—added even a touch of pathos to his personality.

With all this he combined a touch of quaint and irresistible humor, and some of his remarks instantly became current. Felix also played the piano superbly, sang French, Spanish, and Italian songs capitally, conversed delightfully with the few who understood the Latin languages, and was soon deluged with social invitations—to all of which he responded, seemingly animated solely by a desire to afford pleasure, and to awaken an increased interest in "moo-*zik* an' zee lang-*widge*."

But all the while his keen eyes and ears were on the alert.

Though the Abolitionists were by no means rich or influential or accomplished he made himself especially agreeable to them, much to the surprise and dissatisfaction of the Southern families who would have monopolized him. But he was so much interested in "Mees-*taire* Leen-*coon* an' heez preen-*ce*-pal, an' zee parlar oov var-r, an' vat eet ees all *ab*-oot, an' vat zee Nort' *een*-tend do-een *ab*-oot *eet*," he "moost vees-*eet* an' *parlar* veez Messieurs, ali Armeen-*feesh*, eh, I tzee, *troot*, Armentroot, an' Noz, an' Bla-*vee*, an' zee ooth-*aire* gentl'*meen*."

The Abolitionists never dreaming that their brogue-tangled, ever-astonished, pathetically-appealing inquisitor was one of the astutest men of the South—slave-owner, uncompromising Secessionist, and Achates to Jefferson Davis—answered his questions without reservation. Indeed his apparent helplessness, bewilderment, ignorance of everything American, and mute admiration of Mr. Lincoln and his principles, moved them to go into minuter details than



they otherwise would have done had he not been, as they supposed, a foreigner.

Indeed one evening he was invited to the residence of Cornelius Blavey, where a certain Mr. Cullom, who had come from Springfield on a special mission for Mr. Lincoln, was a guest—and “*Mees-taire Kool-m een hees conversati-oan*” added materially to the information, some of it of a vital character, of a certain Mr. Fuentes Fontennette, *alias* Monsieur Felix Palfrey, “late of Paris, France.”

Returning to his humble room that night, and making sure that his door was locked and the curtains drawn, he indulged in several joyful gyratory motions. Evidently he was in a very happy frame of mind.

“I’ve been here only a week,” he chuckled, “and I’ve met the Blaveys, Nosses, and old Amsden; in short, every leading damned Lincoln worshiper in New Richmond, and—Mr. Shelby M. Cullom, envoy-extraordinary from the *Tyrant*. And I guess I’ve about *pumped them dry*. Phew! They all reek with villainous odors—fish, and onions, and—what is it?—yes, hog’s-jaw and *greens*! Quoth the vinegary and peppery old Amsden: ‘Mosher er Musher er Mewtzher Pahlfrey—hoo th’ hell div ye pr’noonce it onyhow? Div ye hae hog’s-jaw ’n’ greens ’n Pahrse? Thocht ye mout hae. Michty feen eatin’!’ Ye gods!”

And again the room echoed with mellow laughter, and the small mirror on the wall reflected a very happy and triumphant face.

The rest of the night was devoted to the writing of a long and carefully-considered letter to Jefferson Davis in which he said:

“I want to confess to you, President Davis, that you were wholly right regarding these Northern Abolitionists, and I was wholly mistaken. As you have always maintained—always to my amusement, and sometimes to my vexation—



with all their uncouthness and defiance of the ordinary graces and amenities of social intercourse, they are a brave, self-respecting, God-fearing people, fierce as Cromwell's Ironsides, relentless as the old New England Puritans, and—they will *fight*! Much as I hate their principles, despise as I do their damnable doctrines, praying as I always do that the God of our Fathers may put them to confusion and bring all their counsels to naught, I cannot keep from admiring them. After all they are Americans and, though at present in the wrong, I am proud of their stalwart manhood and conscientiousness. Defeat them, of course we shall, *must*, and I now see that the conflict is close at hand; but dear Chieftain, they will prove themselves worthy of our sternest steel."

Now for a week he focused his attention on the Southern sympathizers, accepting invitations to their homes, skillfully drawing them out in conversation, keenly scrutinizing every newspaper, but still remaining incognito, and then wrote again to the President:

"Our people in Southern Illinois are brave but too outspoken, too undiplomatic, too abusive of Lincoln. They are blind to the drift of public sentiment, even among Douglas Democrats. Logan is making amazingly effective Union speeches, winning converts by hundreds and thousands—but to them this has no significance. Even your esteemed cousin, the noble and erudite Dr. Culpepper, seems to have lost his reason. Then the letter you wrote to your charming and accomplished Cousin Charlotte—was it prudent to write such a letter?—is lost. I do not know who found it, or by whom it is held, but I do know that it is in the hands of our *enemies*. One thing is certain, I must take our people in hand, and I must act at once."

Palfrey, doubly depressed, had one consolation—his disguise was effective. He knew everyone was on the lookout

for Davis' representative, and that a certain Samuel Simonson was under *surveillance*; but thus far he had escaped suspicion. Could he still keep up the disguise now that he was to begin active work? Could he trust his Southern *confreres*, rash and impetuous, not to inadvertently reveal his identity? "But I have crossed the Rubicon," he grimly remarked to himself, "and I cannot turn back."

On his table lay an invitation to dine that evening at The Elms. He took it up, read it, and proceeded to answer it. In choicest French he accepted it on condition that the dinner be strictly *en familie*, as he wished to communicate to them a matter of gravest importance.

"Ah Vair-geen-ia! Zee leetl' moo-zik mas-taire he ver' clev-aire, ah, *hombre*. I like heem."

"Don't tease your sister, Harold," said Mrs. Culpepper, looking up with a roguish smile, while the Doctor snorted, "Damned dawdler! Doing nothing but strangle on languages, and spiel his infernal classical 'moo-zic.' Pity 'zee ol' mas-taire' didn't die before they were born. 'Mas-taire pee-ziz!' Nothing but damned jargon! What we now need are *men*, not poodles," and he strode out of the room.

Had the Doctor had eyes in the back of his head, and the door been of glass, he would have seen "Vair-geen-ia" saucily making faces at him, and his son holding a very proud and happy mother in his arms, and declaring that the "Guv'ner is the corkingest old chap that ever lived."

"Besides you know, Mother," he continued, "the pater thinks as much of Palfrey as we do; and we know that 'zee leet'l mas-taire eez una, ah, thoroughbred—don't we, *Vergie*?" Whereupon a very indignant sister chased her brother from the room.

It chanced that the Doctor himself responded to the ringing of the doorbell that evening a little before seven.

"Come in!" was followed by a gruff and angry, "Who the devil are you, anyway?"

"Hush, Doctor," said a calm but authoritative voice. "Lock the door, and see that all the blinds are drawn. Am I the only guest?"

"But who the hell are you?" again boomed the Doctor. "We're expecting Palfrey, the music teacher, but it seems that in his stead we've got his double."

"Not so loud, good Doctor," again came the calm, even command. "Here's my card. These are my credentials. You will kindly return my card and credentials when you've inspected them. The light is better in the parlor," with a quiet smile and significant nod, while the Doctor fumbled in his pocket for his glasses.

"Hades!" he sputtered for want of something suitable to the occasion. "Quoth Horace, yes quoth the—the immortal vintner, ah yes: \**Quod marenon cædes Dauniæ decoloravere? Quæ ora caret nostro cruore? Sed ne, procax Musa, relictis jocis, retractes munera Cææ nænïæ; sub antro Dinæo, mecum quære modos levioire plectro.*'"

"Madam," said Palfrey, bowing low to his hostess, who, astonished at the unexpected scene, had suddenly paused in the center of the room, and including her son and daughter in his gracious glance and genuflexion, "I must beseech your generous heart to pardon a deception which, though innocent and necessary, I have not ceased to regret since the first moment it was my privilege and happiness to lay my homage at your shrine. More than this it would not be proper for me to say until my credentials have been passed upon by your honorable husband, and I have been

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\* What sea has not the blood of Romans discolored? What coast is unstained by our gore? But do not, presumptuous Muse, abandon sportive themes, and resume the task of the Cæan dirge; but beneath some grotto sacred to Venus, with me seek measures of a lighter strain.



assured of the forgiveness and gracious favor of the cousin of the illustrious Jefferson Davis, President, by the Grace of God, and the Sovereign Will of the liberty-loving, God-fearing people, of the Confederate States of America; who has honored me for years with perhaps an unusual measure of his confidence, and now has signally honored me by sending me as his personal representative to New Richmond."

It was a dramatic moment—a scene from a thrilling drama in real life. The erstwhile "teach-aire oov moo-zik an' lang-widge'" stood before them, exceedingly stately, in full evening dress *de rigueur*, opera hat in one hand, cane in the other, an opera cloak with Spanish cape on his left arm—as many times he had appeared in the fashionable drawing-rooms of the Old World. His linen was of the finest quality and immaculate, and in the center of his bosom there glowed a diamond, green-blue and lustrous. He wore but a single ring, a rare ruby on the second finger of the left hand—seemingly a gold-bordered fleck of blood, greatly heightening the beauty of his shapely hand. His head was uncommonly large and not unlike that of the younger Dumas, then at the zenith of his fame, and for a young man the face of the Davis envoy was strikingly benevolent.

But his stately speech and bearing were the most astonishing transformations. Now there were no grimaces or shruggings of the shoulders, no deprecating gestures or explanations, no pauses for words, no haltings for correct pronunciation of words, or construction of phrases or sentences.

"Welcome, sir, thrice welcome! Quoth Horace: \*'Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo,' but *you* are more than welcome—for yourself, for the great and good man whose ambassador you are, and for the glorious cause you represent. Here in New Richmond we are in deep distress but we are

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\* I detest the vulgar rabble, and I repel them.



undismayed. Quoth Horace, \*‘Non ardor civium jubentium prava, non vultus instantis tyranni, nec magna manus Jovis fulminantis quatet solida mente virum justum ac tenacem, propositi.’ But come; dinner is waiting.”

Before retiring that night Felix Palfrey wrote a long letter to his mother. Only the following paragraphs, however, will be of special interest to the reader:

“I have been here two weeks and I frankly confess that I am puzzled. Do not think, my dear mother, that I am losing courage or loyalty, though I may have lost my—but let that pass for the present; besides I know you would laugh at me and call me all sorts of funny names, in your own dear way, if I were to tell you.

“But these Abolitionists—they are so honest and earnest and conscientious if I were not a confirmed Secessionist they would convert me to their way of thinking. Oh, yes; they are harsh-voiced, awfully overbearing, dreadfully self-opinionated, but still they are brave, true, patriotic men; and I like them and honor them. And you should hear them pray and preach. They shriek and scream and *drink water in the pulpit from a gourd*, and stamp their feet, and froth at the mouth, and pound the Bible with clenched fists, and pray for our destruction and *damnation*—Oh, it’s horrible! But *dolcissima madre*, they are *sincere*; and sometimes I wonder—but what’s the use to speculate? Certain it is, however, we shall have war, bloody war, a long war—but we are in the right, and surely the good God will give us the victory.

“But in the midst of wild rumors, and my own plottings, I have been sorely wounded. And the precious villain? Why, Cupid—would you have believed it? Dear old Dan Cupid who never before has leveled an arrow at me. Is my wound serious? Dangerous? Alas, how can I tell when this is my first *casualty*? But I fear it is very serious.

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\* Neither the frenzy of his fellow-citizens ordering evil deeds, nor the countenance of the threatening tyrant, nor the mighty hand of Jove wielding his thunderbolts, shakes from his settled purpose the man who is just and firm in his resolution.

Indeed something tells me I am pierced clear through, and that I am doomed *never to get over it*. And yet it is *so* delicious; and I am *so* glad it has happened! Describe her? Ah, what devotee can adequately describe his deity? Of what type of beauty? Thank heaven, now I can answer you sanely. She's a—a composite, a blend, a combination of the best tints and features of all, with the defects and commonplaces of every other type omitted. There! Please, madre *dolcissima*, forgive all this raging rhodomontade, this puerilest of puerile gasconade, and only remember that my *sweetest* sweetheart ever will be the one to whom I am now writing; and that your unworthy Felix will be very *un-Felix* till he looks into her face again, and holds her in his arms once more.

“P. S.—*Her* name is Virginia Lee Culpepper.”

At the same time another letter was being written. It was very much underscored, and there were many interlineations; and as is usually the case, when a woman writes, the main essential part of the letter was in the postscript.

“And, O Freda, *he's* come—my *Prince*! I'm so happy, why it just seems that I shall, shall—*fly* away! He was at The Elms for supper tonight and I was so happy and confused that I actually put a spoonful of *picklelily* in my *tea*! I just thought I should *scream*. And I think he, too, wasn't *quite* himself, for he, while gravely listening to one of Papa's 'Quoth Horace's,' actually began dashing *tobasco sauce* on his *rice*. Of course I quietly handed him the salt and sugar, with just a wee bit of a smile, and what do you think? He said to me in a low voice, 'Do you prefer *picklelily* to lemon-juice in your *tea*?' and there was an awfully roguish look in his eyes. And when Harold, the mean thing, gave my foot a rat-a-tap under the table I could hardly keep from *giggling*. And he's such a *dear*, and a thorough-going *Secessionist*. Who is he? I'm just dying to tell you but I can't—at least for a long, long time. And he's so just and considerate! Why he talks about these Star-Spangled-Banner, Union-forever fanatics as though they were the—the *salt of the earth*. Even sees much to

admire in Lincoln, the old *ogre*. Gives everybody the benefit of the doubt. See? And Patriotism—well you should hear him talk, *only* he refuses to side in with Quoth Horace in the belief that *all* patriotism, and virtue, and bravery are confined to the South. ‘Your neighbors, Doctor, are just as true patriots, just as brave, just as conscientious, as we are *only*, they are mistaken, deceived, led astray by the New England Abolitionists.’ And then you should have heard Quoth Horace *snort*—but finally he had to yield a reluctant acquiescence. ‘Guess you’re right, but *gad*, I hate ‘em anyway!’ Wasn’t that just like dear old Papa? And then I thought I *must* say something to smooth things over, but Harold frowned at me and I knew that meant, ‘Let old Quoth Horace alone; *he’s* all right!’ Of course whatever Papa says or does is all right with Harold—they’re such *chums*! But *he*—Oh, he was fine—said with a voice smooth and even as a diamond’s surface, yet soft as velvet, ‘I do not wonder, Doctor, that you are sensitive and greatly exasperated. Even I sometimes almost wish the earth would tip up and spill them all into the Polar sea, or yawn and swallow them; still we must not oppose unreason to unreason, or intolerance to intolerance, or combat violence with violence. You know, Doctor, we Southerners are a brave, gentle, chivalrous people, with a great and glorious Past; and now we must not forget to be *just*.’

“But sweetest of all was it to hear him speak of his mother—and *her* name’s *Virginia*, too! Oh, I wonder if she ever could like *me*! But how I do *gabble*—for he’s never said a word to me about *love*. But he did hold my hand *a wee bit too long* tonight when he was leaving, and there was *such* an appealing look in his eyes!

“Now do hurry home, dear, for I’ve ever and *ever* so much I want to tell you. Ever your own—

“VERGIE CULPEPPER.”



## CHAPTER VI

### LINCOLN'S TWO FRIENDS HORS DE COMBAT

THE morning after the Davis letter had been lost and found, and the two evening conferences, at Armen-trout's room, and at Judge Gildersleeve's residence, New Richmond had another sensation, this time emanating from the post office.

A letter addressed to "Samuel Simonson, Esq.," had been received. As the patrons of the office were comparatively few Hank Gordon, the postmaster, and his assistant, Miss Mamie Wells, knew almost every patron both by sight and name; hence to receive a piece of mail addressed to an unknown party arose to the dignity of an event.

"Mr. Gordon, who's Samuel Simonson, Esquire?"

"Lives down neah Fa'hhaven."

"No, that's *Abe*; this is *Samuel*."

"Sho 'nuff! Let's see it. Jerusalem blazes! That's f'm Abe Lincoln. How do Ah know? Seen 'iz writin' a thousand' times. Uster tote a chain foh 'im w'en 'e wuz suhveyin' up 'n' Sang'mon County. W'y heah," rummaging in a drawer, "iz a lettuh 'e writ ten y'ar uhgo w'en Linda 'n' meh wuz mahr'd. Let's compah 'um." The writing was identical.

"But who th' sam hill is Samuel Simonson?" he queried, cudgeling his brain.

At that moment a stranger approached and asked if there was any mail for "Samuel Simonson."

The postmaster stepped to the general-delivery window and said, "Is yo' name Samuel Simonson?"

"It is."

"Wha yo' stoppin', Mistuh Simonson? See we hev to be uh leetle keerful 'bout runnin' Uncle Sam's biznis."

"Certainly—quite correct, too. I'm a newcomer, and I'm stopping with your boniface, Mr. Tutwiler. I guess he'll identify me."

It wasn't necessary. Having carefully inspected the stranger the postmaster passed out the letter. To his surprise the handwriting seemed to have no significance to Samuel Simonson, who, leisurely putting it in his pocket, sauntered back to the hotel.

The young lawyer had just seated himself in his office, preparatory to reading his letter, when a man unceremoniously stalked in at the open door.

"Mawnin', strangeh!"

"Good morning, sir," the young lawyer courteously replied. "Won't you have a seat?"

"See heah, Mistuh, Mistuh, Oh, yus, Simonson, Ah've come up tuh hae uh plain talk wi' ye. Ony 'jections?"

"None whatever," rather enjoying the situation.

"Juist ez weel, fuh Ah'd hae me saiy on'hoosooaevuh. Truth is theith's ae mighty sight o' telk about ye'n thiz town."

"About *me*? Why, sir, I've been in New Richmond less than twenty-four hours, and I don't know even your name."

"Ma name's Amsden Armentrout, un Ah wan' tae ken wha ye air, un w'at yer daein' hyar."

For a moment the young lawyer flushed with anger and half rose to order his caller out of the room. However, he quickly considered the folly of this and, leaning back in his chair, replied:

"Certainly, Mr. Armentrout, with pleasure. My name's Samuel Simonson; and my business? Well, I have none yet. I'm a lawyer."

"Ah'm 'bleeged—bu' noo yer rael name 'n' beeznis, please. Noo dinna gie roiled. Th' sit'ashun's thiz: Th' town's un th' ruzzer-aige o' 'citement, th' hale country's fuh 'at mattuh. Some o' th' s'ceshuhs air tryin' t' tuhn New Richmon' un Raleigh Coonty, ower t' th' Southuhn Fud'r'cy, an' uh hain'fu' o' we-uns air foutin' lak th' auld hahry t' keep oor eend o' th' woods in th' Unyan. Unduhstan'?"

Simonson nodded affirmatively.

"Verra weel. Baith sides air on th' luikoot fuh uh raip'-sen'ative frae heidquatuhs, Ah ken ut. Hoo Ah ken ut iz naebody's beez. We Ah luikin' fo' uh 'Nited States Mahshul; thae'uh luikin' fo' uh ajint frae 'at doobul-doid traituh, Jaiff Davus. Wuh've scrapit th' hale toown wi' uh chasem coomb 'n' th' unly twa strenghehs hyar air yersel 'n' uh li'l hae-wittud freog-stickuh named Pahlfruh. Ah've soized oop baith o' yirs, 'n' th' li'l roont disna coont. Noo w'at Ah wunt tae ken iz, Whilk air ye, an' w'at air ye? Lincoln's er Davus' ems'sahry?"

"Maybe I'm neither, Mr. Armentrout."

"Yus, 'n' mebbe yir baith."

"How could that be?"

"P'itin' t' be ane whilie raelly tither."

The young lawyer laughed. The veiled accusation was both absurd and amusing.

"But, Mr. Armentrout, do you think I'm playing a double rôle?"

"Nuh-oo."

"Whom, then, do you think I am?"

"Weel, t' bae oopen, Jaiff Davus' stool-pidgeon."

"But why me rather than the other stranger?"

"'At dafty loon? W'y 'e disna ken ez muckle ez th' man w'at gaed uh hoontin' 'n' fuhgut t' tak 'iz gun. Acks lak uh moonkey an' a' 'e kin saiy iz, 'we, we,' un 'ah!' Ijiot, ha' th' toime 'e ca's meh 'Mees-tah Airmeen-feesh.' Un gin



Ah k'richt 'im 'e dreaws oop 'iz shoulduhs, um wigguls 'iz a'hms lak thees"—making the obnoxious motions—"un saiy, 'we we—ah, w'at eez zee deef-*rong* bit-win troot, 'n' *feesh?* Air no a' zee troot *feesh?* 'N' th' ither mawnin', w'at div ye think? 'E ast Missus Bahnes—'e boad's 't huh hoose—t' freiy 'im soom freog-laigs fuh 'iz *allmooayrstroh*, meanin', Ah raickun, 'iz brakfas'. Un Missus Bahnes was 'at mad sh' mummicked 'im richt tae 'iz face, un' sed, 'Nae Mees-*taire*, Ah dinna cook *moonkey* fud.'"

"And so you think I'm here to represent Jeff Davis?"

"Ah ken't!"

"And, pray tell me, what proof you have, Mr. Armen-trout, seeing that I arrived only yesterday at midday."

"Wha did ye ca' on yist'day a'ternoon?"

"Judge Gildersleeve."

"Zactly! Uh fotch-tekked raibul, bu' th' w'ites' o' th' hale k'boodl'. Un whah did ye bide las' nicht?"

"At Judge Gildersleeve's. Because I'm a co-collegian, and am an admirer of Daniel Webster, and was a stranger, he very kindly invited me to his home."

"Th' unly ane thah fuh suppuh?"

"No, a Mr. Harold Culpepper was there. I believe he's soon to marry the Judge's daughter."

"Un a'ter suppuh?"

"Oh, there were several callers—Dr. Culpepper, Professor Pinckney, Mr. Goldbeck, the merchant, Voe Bijaw, the editor, and a few others, mostly young people, however."

"A' raibuls. O'rt tae b' hung, ilka ane o' 'em. Voe Bijaw's jes' er *snipe* un disna 'moun' tae onything—a' mooth 'n' feet 'n' nae brain. Auld Pink's uh dreamuh—a' brain 'n' nae sainse. Auld Golduh's uh monuh-grub—sail 'iz soul fuh twa bits. Tew stingy t' buy burd-seed fuh th' cuckoo en 'iz clock. Bu' Doc Culpaipuh—'e's *hell on wheels*. Un gin th'

Southun 'Fud'r'cy hed dooly 'sembled w'at did yir talk about?"

Armentrout thought he had the young lawyer cornered and was exultant—for the moment insolent.

Simonson suddenly remembered Marjorie—the hour they had spent, *tete-a-tete*, before the open fireplace in the family sitting room, alone; her low, musical voice; her—

"It's none of your business, Mr. Armentrout, on whom I called yesterday afternoon, with whom I dined last evening, what people called, or where I spent the night." The young lawyer was deeply angered, and his face was flushed. "The people whom I have met in New Richmond, yourself excepted, may be 'damned rebels,' as you say—of that I know nothing; but I can say for them that they have been well-bred and courteous—and that's *more* than I can say for *you*."

"Nae mair ansuh's nuc'surruh, Mistuh *Spy*, *Traituh*!"

The young lawyer had taken the yet-unopened letter out of his pocket and carelessly laid it on the table where Armentrout's eye, as he had begun his tirade, had caught the handwriting. Advancing on the young lawyer, and pounding on the table with his clenched fist, he fairly hissed:

"Noo Ah *ken* ye're uh *Spy*, uh *Traituh*, uh damn' doobul-doid *Villun*. Luik at thet laituh!"

Simonson now was deathly pale. He had often wondered what was the murder-feeling—the feeling of a man at the moment when in cold blood and self-controlled anger, homicidal fury, he deliberately deals the death-blow to a fellow man—but now he *knew*. The space about him seemed to swarm with swirling flecks of red—*blood-splotches*. In an even, level, colorless tone, holding himself steadily in hand, he said:

"Mr. Armentrout, *I* have a few words to say to *you*. When I am through you will leave this room instantly or

I shall kill you. I was born in Missouri twenty-eight years ago. I'm not a renegade, as you seem to think I am, but a gentleman. I've come to New Richmond for the sole purpose of practicing law. Just why I chose this place, in preference to a thousand others vastly more to my liking, is none of your business. As to politics or religion—you're too base and ignorant to understand what I'd say on those subjects, and so I shall say nothing. This, however, I shall say to you, and you shall not interrupt me, and if you dare open your mouth to contradict me I swear by the eternal God you shall not leave my presence alive. Now, hear me: I am no man's agent, emissary, or representative—not Davis', not Lincoln's. I have never had speech with either of them—with neither have I ever had communication, either epistolary, or from hand or mouth of either's agent, emissary, or representative. To the best of my knowledge neither of them knows even of my existence. I hold no man's brief or commission, none except my Heavenly Father's to be a Man, true, upright, honorable, and that, thank God, I am. Therefore it is morally impossible for me to be a spy, or traitor, or double-dyed villain, as you declare me to be. Were I not a gentleman I would now apply to you a few epithets which you eminently deserve, and that would aptly characterize you. But I desist, not wishing to put myself in your class, or on your level. Now I give you sixty seconds, just one minute"—taking out his watch—"to get out of my presence. Go, or by the God I worship I shall send your soul to hell!"

Amsden Armentrout was no coward, but some men are not safe to interrupt or contradict when angered to a cold and calculating blood-fury, a fact the bravest men recognize. Nor was Amsden the brutal bully, the ill-bred cur, his speech and manner would indicate. But he was high-tempered



and, sometimes, exceedingly irascible. He was also a man of violent prejudices, but, at heart, the soul of integrity.

Armentrout's *bête noir* was Jefferson Davis; his object of supreme veneration, Abraham Lincoln; his shrine of worship, the Federal Union. He was known to be in correspondence with Lincoln, and to enjoy the great Commoner's boundless confidence. The young lawyer's deliberate sentences, uttering a rebuke that would have crushed a weaker man, or goaded him to violence, had given him time to realize he had used opprobrious epithets and made charges that were at once cruel and without sufficient proof; and had inflicted a wound that might never heal, a breach that might never be repaired; and when the curt, incisive, peremptory command to "get out" was given he quietly pointed to the yet unopened letter on the table, and saying, "Ah'll leave you' t' read yo' lettuh fr'm Mistuh Lincoln," Ah wes t' gang beck tae 'iz orfus ahgin hu'd puhrf'rate meh retired.

Dazed and trembling from the reaction from his excitement and fury the young lawyer tore open the envelope and extracted a single sheet of common note paper. As through a mist he gazed for several minutes on the fine, neat chirography. Gradually the words took form and combined into coherent sentences. At last he was able to grasp the full meaning. The communication was as follows:

"Samuel Simonson, Esq.—Dear Sir: I have requested several of my trusted friends, among them Justice Higdon, late of Harvard University, to furnish me the names of a number of young men who, by education, training, courage, and moral integrity, are qualified to be my steady, reliable right arms at divers strategic points. Among the names thus submitted I find yours. Justice Higdon informs me he has known you about ten years, and speaks of you in a manner that causes me to desire to meet you personally. The fact that you have become a citizen of New Richmond adds to this desire. Should you accept this invitation to visit me,

I would suggest: 1. That you keep the matter of receiving this invitation a secret, except to one Amsden Armentrout. 2. That you show this letter to said Armentrout, and confer with him as to what course you would better pursue. You will like Armentrout, for he is a loyal citizen, a man of the strictest integrity, and a friend in whom you can always fully and safely confide. Yours resp'y, A. LINCOLN."

The young lawyer's resentment now was all gone. "What a fool I was to quarrel with such a man as Lincoln declares Armentrout to be," was his first thought. Under the spell of Lincoln's letter, and in the glow created by the knowledge that his Harvard friend and professor had commended him to the President-elect, he took on himself all the blame. "I trifled, *trifled* with this high-souled, valorous patriot," he said. "And when he could no longer endure my quibbling, and silly evasions, and denounced me, what did I do? Became melodramatic, raved like a fool, and threatened, actually threatened—*murder!* I wouldn't have Mr. Lincoln and Justice Higdon know this for anything. I must see this loyal and unswerving Roundhead and make this matter right with him—if I can." And thrusting his hat on his head, he rushed down to the street.

In the meantime Armentrout, himself penitent on account of the merciless castigation he had administered to the strange young lawyer, had gone to the postoffice. There he, too, had received a letter from Lincoln. It was brief and to the point:

"My Dear Old Friend: I want you to turn diplomat for me—not the shirt-sleeves sort, but the suave, ingratiating, heart-winning kind. There's a young man in your town, a newcomer, by the name of Samuel Simonson, by profession a lawyer, whom we wish to enlist in our holy cause. He is a young man of splendid education, great ability, high moral character, and a stranger to fear. If you enlist him under our banner you will place me under renewed obliga-

tions and, I am persuaded, render the Union an inestimable service. I have just invited him to come to Springfield and confer with me, but I am not sure he will come. Please see him at once and hasten matters, as I am preparing to go to Washington in a few days. I have asked him to advise with you immediately. Yrs Aftly,  
A. LINCOLN."

"Thar, A've gang un dune't, noo, bloonderin' auld blockheid 'at Ah aim! W'at'll guid auld Abe think o' meh noo? *Meh!*—'suave, ingratiating, heart-winning!' (Reading from Mr. Lincoln's letter.) Ah'm uh dodderin' auld gaberlunzie, 'at's w'at Ah aim. 'Win him to our cause'—hell! Ah've fu' aye tarned 'im ahgin ut, 'n' ahgin meh, 'n' ahgin auld Abe, 'n' ahgin ilka thing 'igh 'n' 'oly. 'Confer with' *meh*—yus, Ah seez 'im 'furrin' wi' meh! Th' deil 'n' Tom Walkuh. Oh, *sallymyjackuhlum!* 'Please see him at once'—No' un yuh life, Fathuh Abruh'm! Guess Ah ken muhduh gin Ah seez ut—'n' 'iz een wuh juist twa raid oshuns o't, juist uh sloshun ower wi' ut. Face 'im ahgin? Ruthuh face Jaiff Davus 'n' th' hale Southun 'Fud'r'cy, wi' auld fahr 'n' brumstene Bob Toombs thrown in fuh gude maishuh. W'y, ef Ah wes t' gang beck tae 'iz orfus ahgin hu'd puhrf'rate meh wi' laid tull Ah cudna b' used fuh uh salt-saileh, uh er nail-sieve."

Thus absorbed with bitter musings, and mentally flaggellating himself unmercifully, he suddenly found himself face to face with the young lawyer. Each held in his left hand a letter from the hand of Abraham Lincoln.

"Ah wuz uh dodderin' ass," said Armentrout.

"I was a damned fool," replied the young lawyer.

"Shake!" they both exclaimed; and, hand in hand, they returned to the young lawyer's office.



## CHAPTER VII

### SAMUEL SIMONSON THE GUEST OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WELL, Sammy, my boy, how are you?"

The young lawyer was pleasurablely surprised at the familiar greeting of the President-elect, and all the more because Mr. Lincoln's tone of voice and manner were so convincingly unaffected and sincere. Too, there was something about the tall, gaunt figure that was singularly appealing, wistful. Homely unquestionably he was, even more than he had anticipated—the cartoonists had not greatly exaggerated his angularity, or the size of his hands and mouth and feet. He also had an old look that was out of keeping with his years; his shoulders were drooped, and his face was deeply wrinkled. His voice was thin and wiry and pitched to a minor key. There was no evidence of weakness or indecision in his speech or bearing, and yet that he was temperamentally melancholy and subject to seasons of deep dejection was manifest. When the young lawyer recalled the many vile and cruel things he had heard and read regarding him, aspersions of which the President-elect could not possibly be ignorant, and looked at the deep-set eyes, and somber face with corners of mouth slightly drooped, involuntarily he thought of the words of the Prophet: "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not."

Four years later, looking into the same face, then limned into pathetic beauty by "the deep damnation of his taking

off," and remembering his kindly deeds, deeds of unexampléd magnanimity, the young lawyer recalled how the same venerable Prophet, still speaking of another, had said: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

After some general conversation, Mr. Lincoln said, "Raleigh County is the United States in epitome, and its people bear all the marks of their ancestry and previous environment. Socially, there are two distinct classes in Raleigh County, and between them 'there is a great gulf fixed': the bold, defiant Southern aristocracy, and the 'po' white trash.' Strangely enough, there is no antagonism between these two classes. For generations one class has assumed the right of dictation, and the other has submitted to servility; and with both classes the relation has become second nature, practically that of master and slave.

"Politically, however, a new spirit is abroad and its whisperings have been heard in New Richmond. A question not easily settled has arisen. It is the age-long controversy between plebeian and patrician. Thus far the final verdict of men has been, no less than the edict of Nature, that the patrician—the larger and more competent—shall rule, and with that edict and verdict I am in perfect accord.

"Indeed, I am of the opinion that the brainy Southern planters, other things being equal, should have ruled, for they were the better qualified to rule. Nor does the fact that there were mistakes under the old Southern *regime*, and sometimes cruel and unjust uses of power, militate in the least against the great basal principle: The best qualified to rule should rule. Hence, between plebe and patrician, governmentally, I should vote for the patrician; likewise I should stand for the Southern master in preference to the more or less unqualified 'cracker.' Consequently, indeed

from necessity, when the supremacy of state or nation is in question, I vote good and hard for the nation. Of these two opposing forces and principles, Dr. Fairfax Culpepper and Amsden Armentrout are representatives. Under which banner would *you* prefer to serve?"

"Neither," replied the young lawyer.

Mr. Lincoln was startled by the unexpected answer; and then, smiling quizzically, "And why under neither?"

"Because in half their assumptions I think them both partially wrong; in the other half, wholly wrong."

For the first time, Mr. Lincoln laughed outright. "*I jing, Sammy, I like that. Go on; explain yourself.*"

"I fear, Mr. Lincoln, I should offend you."

"Have no fear; your voice rings true. Be perfectly frank with me; you know I have a weakness for boys and young men. *No beating about the bush now, Sammy.*"

"Very well, Mr. President-elect. To begin, though I am of the South, I like you, and believe in you. In my heart I revere both you and Mr. Davis, and believe the two of you to be equally honest, honorable, and patriotic. Again: Culpepper hates everything Northern; Armentrout hates everything Southern—my heart is held captive equally by North and South. As I figure it out, Mr. Lincoln, both sides are equally conscientious, equally patriotic, and possibly equally in error. Finally, both Culpepper and Armentrout are rabidly denunciatory, which I detest."

"How about *Slavery*, Sammy?" The question was abrupt.

"Abstractly or concretely?"

"Both."

"Abstractly, I agree with much you said in your debate with Judge Douglas—perhaps all of it; in the concrete—well, I'm not convinced. In fact, I doubt if emancipation would add anything to the negro's happiness or well-being, while emancipation and enfranchisement—and the two are



inseparable—would plunge us into a seething whirlpool of economic and political difficulties.”

“Possibly you are right, Sammy—but what if we should free them and transport them to Africa?”

“We haven’t steam and sail sufficient. They’d breed faster than we could ship them; besides, you have no legal right to either free or transport them.”

The young lawyer felt that he was ruining himself in Mr. Lincoln’s estimation, but could not conscientiously trim or temporize.

There came a far-away look into Mr. Lincoln’s eyes. A child had brought in a tousled, vagrant cat, and he was absent-mindedly, or seemingly so, holding it in his lap and stroking its back. A black woman—she had just buried her husband—evaded the servant at the door and came into his presence. He heard her tale of woe, comforted her, and placed a dollar in her hand. A handsome silver vessel, a “loving cup,” engraved and gold-lined, a present from the Boston Abolitionists, was brought in. He listened patiently to the presentation speech, made a few remarks in reply, and called Martha Washington, the hired negro woman, to take it out. A minute later she returned and exclaimed, “Oh, Massa Linkum, w’at shall Ah do wit’ ut?” “I don’t know. Feed it to the chickens, I reckon.” He had forgotten all about it. Her black face had momentarily suggested chickens and a bag of meal, or peck of oats.

“What about the secession of the states, and the action of the Rebels down South?” Mr. Lincoln was again keenly alert.

“Pardon me, Mr. Lincoln; is it wise to use exasperating terms?”

“You’re right, Sammy. Judge Douglas often unhorsed himself that way. But, terms aside, what do you think of the last move of the South?”

"I'm not a great lawyer like yourself, Mr. Lincoln, and therefore speak with great diffidence. However, I doubt not but the states in withdrawing from the Union have acted entirely within their constitutional rights."

"How do you figure that out, Sammy?" The question was asked as casually as though he were inquiring about the weather, or the prospects for a good corn crop.

"Well, as you know, Mr. Lincoln, the states originally were sovereign and independent nations, as absolutely such as are the German and Italian nations of to-day; again, in the original draft of the Constitution, the prefatory words, 'We, the People,' were followed by the names of each of the contracting states, the contracting parties being states; again, Rhode Island and South Carolina at first refused to accept the Constitution—that is, to become parties to the contract—and for several months continued to exercise all the prerogatives of sovereign and independent nations, against which neither Washington nor the Federal Government uttered no protest; again, three Northern states—New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts—and two Southern states—Virginia and South Carolina—came into the Union with the express stipulation that they should be permitted to resume their sovereignty at their own pleasure; and Mr. Buchanan, whom you're soon to succeed, himself a Northerner, has officially declared to Congress that without this pledge, granted as a matter of course, not a state would have surrendered its sovereignty and come into the Union; again, till fifteen years ago Massachusetts repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the Union, threats Jefferson Davis himself often heard in both House and Senate, and her right to secede from the Union was never questioned; again, Justice Marshall and Alexander Hamilton, than whom it would be impossible to find higher authorities on the Constitution, one its supreme maker and the other its supreme interpreter,

declared that neither the Federal Government nor any combination of states has the constitutional right to keep a dissatisfied state in the Union by coercion; again, the tenth amendment to the Constitution was avowedly and emphatically enacted as an open door of exit for states that might become dissatisfied with the Union and desire to withdraw from it, enacted to quiet the fears of certain hesitant states lest the Federal Government should some day deny their right to resume their sovereignty and punish them if they attempted to do so; and finally, Mr. Lincoln, you yourself publicly conceded, in a speech you made in Congress, December 22, 1847, the inalienable right of a dissatisfied state to sever its connection with the Federal Union and resume its original sovereignty, as Daniel Webster before you had done. Hence, in my humble opinion, Mr. Lincoln, as the several seceding states have but exercised their constitutional right, they are not 'rebel' states; and since they have become sovereign and independent states, by strictest and correctest constitutional processes, their citizens are not 'traitors,' though it seems to me they would have become traitors had they refused allegiance to their respective states, and aligned themselves with a foreign power. Some things—loyalty, for instance—begin at home; and the state is our political roof-tree and hearthstone, as Robert E. Lee has declared."

Not by so much as the flicker of an eyelid did Mr. Lincoln indicate disagreement or resentment; to the contrary, he was profoundly impressed. Simonson was a young man, a border-state man, a Missourian of Southern antecedents, college-bred, a Boston product, had spent a year in Europe, evidently had read widely and thought deeply and independently, and was serious, conscientious, fearless.

"Then the President has no constitutional authority, Sammy, to arrest and bring to judgment a state that has gone out of the Union?"



"Oh, yes," laughed the young lawyer, now speaking jestingly, "you can ignore the fact that certain states, parties of the second part to a contract, called the Federal Constitution, by due process of law have withdrawn from a certain corporation, known as the Government of the United States, party of the first part, and declare that said states, naming them, are in a state of 'sedition and rebellion,' and call for troops to put down said 'insurrection of rebels and insurgents,' and, in defiance of said contract, namely, the Federal Constitution, send said troops into said sovereign and independent states—now foreign nations—and crush them by military force, regardless of every solemn covenant and guarantee."

But though the young lawyer was joking, Lincoln was not. Something had touched in Lincoln's breast the springs of deep emotion. His homely face had suddenly become the mirror of mighty, contending thoughts and feelings. His breath came faster, and in his voice, now low and hoarse, there was a hint of iron purpose.

"Then, Sammy, you would regard the saving of the Union, and the freeing of the slaves, both unconstitutional and unjustifiable?"

"Oh, no, Mr. President-elect, I would not presume to speak thus *ex cathedra*, least of all to you, sir, a great lawyer; and especially since so soon you are to act officially and decisively—and with finality—on all these solemn and perplexing questions. I can speak jestingly, though somewhat realizing the gravity of the situation, because I am free from responsibility; with *you*, sir, it is different. Forgive me, Mr. Lincoln, if I have spoken with too great levity, or—presumption."

"No offense, my boy. So you think I should suffer this government to be destroyed, and human beings to remain in bondage, simply because our fathers did not foresee present

perils, or were not awake to certain moral and humane demands, and so left us without adequate laws?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Lincoln, I did not mean it that way."

"Then what would you advise?"

"I am too young, sir, to advise *you*."

"Ah, Sammy, once a younger man than you was Prime Minister of England; indeed, a man only about your age led in framing and securing the adoption of the Constitution. In years I'm the elder, and in rough-and-tumble experience with the world, but in knowledge of books and scholarly associations you're my senior. I, too, as you say, am an interested party, and the fierce and awful struggle in which I have been engaged, especially since I locked horns with Judge Douglas, may have warped my judgment. Speak frankly, Sammy. It does an old man good to get a glimpse of himself and of the world through a pair of keen, trained, unblinking young eyes."

"I thank you, Mr. Lincoln. You are very kind—kinder than I——"

"That'll do, Sammy. Enough of that, as the man said when a bull had gored him and pitched him over the fence. But we were speaking of slavery, and secession, and the constitutionality of certain acts I *may* have contemplated."

Thus urged, "Sammy" continued: "Justice Higdon, one of my Harvard professors, now of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and an ardent Abolitionist, declares that a thousand presidents and congresses combined could not lawfully abolish slavery without an amendment to the Federal Constitution—except, *possibly*, as a war measure. As to the abstract right of a once sovereign state to withdraw from the Federal compact and resume its independent sovereignty, I am willing to abide by your own affirmative declaration in your 1848 speech, bulwarked and buttressed as it is by the like opinions of Marshall, Webster, and Greeley. Besides,

you know that 'Rawle's View of the Constitution' was one of the text-books at West Point when Jefferson Davis and many other Southern leaders were there as cadets. Rawle was a Northerner, a Pennsylvanian, and he distinctly taught in his book the inalienable right of every state to withdraw from the Union—and instead of said act constituting treason, or being viewed as being in any way reprehensible, it should be regarded as altogether honorable, should the rights or liberties of the citizens of said states be in jeopardy, said states being the sole judges of the sufficient peril or provocation.

"But," the young lawyer presently resumed, "there is such a thing as progress—evolution.

'New occasions teach new duties ;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth ;  
They must be upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast of Truth.'

"The Saviour recognized this fact and declared that old bottles could not contain new wine. So He dealt the old order its death blow ; but out of it came a new and better order—*Christianity*."

"Stop, Sammy. You say governments may outgrow their constitutions and institutions?"

"Certainly, Mr. Lincoln."

"And that he who destroys evil institutions, however old and once revered, and ends or revises laws and constitutions that fetter progress, does a praiseworthy act?"

"Undoubtedly."

"If, then, I could wipe out slavery and, even at the peril, possibly at the cost, of my life, make this glorious Union of states forever indissoluble, do you think it would be worth while?"

"It certainly would place your name among the Immortals



—Cæsar, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, Cromwell, Washington.”

“But, young man, is it possible? Can it be done? What is the drift of the world, the trend of the times?”

“You, Mr. Lincoln, are a better judge than I am. You are in the whirl of public events, the great and potential movements of the world.”

“Yes, Sammy, in such a whirl I’m dizzy, almost blinded. How does it appear to *you*?”

“Mr. Davis, whom I heard in Boston less than two years ago,” the young lawyer replied, “does not seem to realize as you do—and I speak dispassionately—that this is an era of ferment, unrest, transition, all over the world, and that seemingly we have outgrown our constitution, and that the new wine of nineteenth century ethical, political, and reformatory ideals cannot be contained in the old bottles of seventeenth and eighteenth century constitutions. This is Mr. Davis’ greatest weakness, as your contrary conviction is your greatest element of strength. Moreover, Mr. Lincoln, your arm will be strengthened by the spirit of liberty which is abroad, in the very air, and everywhere is insistent. Whether wisely or foolishly, rightly or wrongly, the world hates slavery; and so far as you champion Liberty the world will be on your side. Furthermore, this is an era of unification. Russia is unifying; so are Germany and Italy—and France and England are striving for a closer union with their distant colonies. Separation and segregation, territorially, are peculiarly abhorrent to every great power; the precedent, should Mr. Davis be successful, would be against the policy and ambitions of all the great powers. Hence, you will have their sympathy, good-will, and, possibly, their coöperation. Finally, the use of steam and of electricity, and American inventive genius, are ushering in a new and wonderful epoch of commerce and manufacture.

With this tremendous quickening and expansion along all commercial and industrial lines necessarily there must be new and larger laws, and yet larger constructions and interpretations of the Constitution."

Suddenly the young lawyer was self-conscious, abashed. That he should have preached to the President-elect, turned prophet, filled him with amazement, almost terror. If he was an Abolitionist, he did not know it—he thought he was not. If he was a Lincoln-Unionist, it was a surprise to him—he had not so rated himself. If he was a "Liberal Constructionist," reading into the Constitution things of which its immortal authors had never dreamed, he had just awakened to the fact—it never before had occurred to him. How had it all come about? His larger vision, wider, firmer grip on things, and keener, clearer comprehension!

Like a flash it came to him—LINCOLN. Unperceived by himself, he had been led on: now a look, now a frown or smile, occasionally an exclamation, rarely a completed sentence—yet all the while Lincoln had been lifting him to higher azures, leading him to wider horizons, drawing him out, opening his eyes.

Nor was Lincoln apparently conscious of what he was doing. Again, absent-mindedly, he was stroking the back of the vagabond cat, and watching the play of the sunshine among the boughs of a scraggy elm visible through the window. Down the street a newsboy was shrilly shrieking his wares; but the man of whom the whole world was thinking and talking, and whose name was in every paper and periodical, of all men was seemingly the least concerned. A loosened icicle fell with a crash on the frozen ground; the song of a canary in the next room for a moment gladdened the pervading silence with rhythmic cadences; an Italian organ-grinder, with a red-capped monkey, paused at the gate, looked at the house, and then trudged on. Presently

the strains of "*Ah, I have sighed to rest me*" came floating back. All was as simple and idyllic as a country pastoral.

It seemed to the young man that the great man had forgotten him; and that what he had said likewise was forgotten. Once more the strained, drawn look was fading from Mr. Lincoln's face—he was almost smiling, and his eyes were soft as a young girl's, standing, in the early morning, in a bower of morning-glories still sparkling with the fleeting jewels of the night. "Perhaps he is thinking," the young lawyer thought, "of boyhood pranks, or of days of happy dalliance before his 'call' had come, or maybe of some sweetheart in the joyous time before the iron had entered his soul."

Slowly turning to the young lawyer: "Justice Higdon was not mistaken. You're all he represented you to be, and—Amsden Armentrout. I'm proud to know you, and I hope to know you better. In my opinion, your analysis of present conditions, and judgment regarding future probabilities are correct—in the main. You are uncertain about some things, and so am I; but of one thing I am absolutely *certain*: If I live, if—I—live—law or no law, constitution or no constitution, I mean to do two things—save the Union, and free the slave! If that's in the Constitution, well and good; if it's not in the Constitution, then I'll put it there, *God being my Helper!*"

"But, Mr. President-elect, that would be anarchy rampant, the very charge you bring against Davis and his *confreres*."

"I don't understand you, Sammy."

"I mean this, Mr. Lincoln: Your threatened defiance of the Constitution, and government single-handed, according to your deep-seated passion and individual opinion—that's the political philosophy of every tyrant. How can you be a law-abiding citizen and at the same time defy the law? How can



you be a constitutional ruler and spurn the constitution? How can you be true to your presidential oath and at the same time violate it? You know the oath you must take before you can become President—have read it, considered it?”

“Yes, Sammy, till it has gashed and burned to the deepest depths of my poor soul.”

The harassed and hunted look had returned—his face was now more deeply seamed than ever, and his eye-sockets were cavernous. Now to anguish was added perplexity. More, there was a touch of horror, softened by wonderful compassion—such a face as only Dorè could have painted, only Milton or Dante could have described. What wonder he writhed and struggled? Oath-bound to a narrow constitution; conscience-bound to a broad Humanity. Pledged to Slavery; plighted to Liberty. Sworn to defend and preserve a constitution and an institution to one of which he was resolved to do violence, to the other—*destruction*. Meekly holding out hands for statutory and constitutional fetters which, in the holy of holies of his soul, he had covenanted with his Maker to rend and destroy. Pleading gentleness; planning war. Avowing boundless love for the South, his ancestral mother, yet soon to inflict a blow that would result in a hemorrhage of blood and treasure unparalleled in the annals of time—a Quaker destined to make the career of Attila seemingly a drama of sugared love-sonnets and dreamy moonlight-madrigals. Brave, but—with a touch of superstition that sometimes made him tremble. With abnormal ardency desiring long life, a peaceful old-age afternoon and evening, and a tranquil exit from the world, yet with that prescience given to rapt souls, foreseeing vilification, persecution, illimitable hatred, and a bloody, tragic death. And from all this from the first he realized—for, like

all great men, and most old men, he was both seer and fatalist—there was no escape.

“Sammy,” presently he said, “let’s think clearly and strive to arrive at a logical and defensible conclusion. I’ll lead off and think aloud, and you can call a halt whenever you detect anything fallacious.

“We’ll say, as a starter, that three things are essential to our well-being: sustenance, law, religion. Very good; but—the doctors don’t agree as to raiment, food, medicine, or treatment. The allopaths are said to be orthodox, and the homeopaths heterodox. I prefer the smaller doses and the little sugar pills; so, medically, I suppose I am a heretic.

“Likewise priests and preachers are not agreed. Even at the beginning Paul and Peter disagreed on certain points, and there were two schools: the Pauline and the Petrine. In our day creeds and sects are innumerable. I’ve heard most of the great preachers and like them all; yes, even Peter Cartwright, though I could never swallow his Hades Double Extract of Brimstone Compound. Mumford, rare man and eloquent preacher, but—he wanted to quash every indictment, regardless of the evidence, or attitude and history of the arraigned; and that wasn’t good law or wholesome practice. Peter Akers, the prophetic, and Matthew Simpson, the seraphic—ah, they have done my soul a world of good! In religion, as in medicine, we have the orthodox and the heterodox; and if Jonathan Edwards, Lyman Beecher, and Peter Cartwright represent orthodoxy, then, again, I suppose I’m a heretic. My children couldn’t make me *mad* at them, or *hate* them; and as for me sending my children away into hell-fire and brimstone forever and forever—why, a father that would do that ought to be scourged out of the universe. But the Heavenly Father is so infinitely better and kinder than we are!

“So as to law—from the establishment of our govern-

ment we have had two schools: Strict Constructionists and Liberal Constructionists. Southern statesmen mainly have been strict constructionists; and ours has been a government of Southern statesmen. All of our presidents, save three, and practically all our chief justices, have been Southern men. By instinct, environment, and economic necessity, they have all been strict constructionists.

"But strict construction, Sammy, sounds the death-knell of progress; and arrested progress spells destruction—it is *the letter that killeth*. Progress may make the best thing of yesterday the worst thing for to-day. You have just reminded me that 'new occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth.'

"The strict constructionist is orthodox, a slave to the letter that killeth, clings to the old way, adheres to the ancient formula, declines the 'new duties,' adores 'the ancient good uncouth,' and despises the modern good divine.

"But what is orthodoxy? In medicine it is the opinion of certain departed physicians; in religion it is the opinion of certain departed theologians; in law it is the opinion of certain departed statesmen.

"But all these certain departed physicians, theologians, and statesmen were men, Sammy, just like you and me, with all our limitations; sometimes right and sometimes wrong; sometimes wise and sometimes foolish; sometimes wholesome and sometimes unwholesome; sometimes entirely conscientious, but also entirely errant—errancy due to prenatal influences, inherited biases, uneven and unequal mental and ethical poise, culture, and discipline, arrest of development by early conceived and prematurely adopted fallacious theories, the inevitable warping of mind and judgment by sharp and angry controversies, the fury of party, professional, and ecclesiastical strife, the ambition always to be considered



consistent, the betraying and deluding incense of flattery, popular applause, or worldly gain, passion, prejudice."

"And in politics, Mr. Lincoln, you are——?"

"I'm a broad constructionist, Sammy, as Washington was, as Cromwell was, as the Saxon-Germans were, as Saul of Tarsus was, and—I speak reverently of that matchless Man—as Jesus our Saviour was."

"Then you would——?"

"Save the Union, abolish slavery, win back the hearts of those who are now estranged, and increase the measure of human happiness and well-being. I would purge the statutes of all obsolete laws; repeal all unjust laws; revise all good laws that are incomplete, imperfect, inadequate, or ambiguous; enact new laws to meet new conditions; and amend the Constitution to meet present needs, not hastily or recklessly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God—using it but not abusing it; hallowing it but not making of it a fetich.

*"The Constitution was made for man—not man for the Constitution."*

Presently the conversation drifted. The care-lines in Mr. Lincoln's face relaxed, and an exquisite gentleness stole over his rugged features. His voice ceased to be harsh and rasping, and gradually mellowed, as the notes of a distant flute. The short February afternoon faded into twilight. Snowflakes were drifting in the air, and the moan of the wind mingled with the roar of the fire.

Mr. Lincoln spoke of the rare culture of the South, its gracious hospitality, its beautiful women and illustrious men, and its deep and fervent piety. "And," he continued musingly, "what we hastily call Southern treason is, in truth, *state patriotism*. But their strict construction of the Constitution has lowered the azure and limited the horizon of their patriotism until they cannot see or think or feel nationally.

And," with a tone of profound melancholy, "they have been strict constructionists only in order to perpetuate slavery. Yet even now if we were to be assailed by a foreign power, every Southern state would march with us in solid phalanx, and help drive the invader out.

"Ah, yes, Sammy, they are patriots all—sincere, brave, glorious—blood of my blood, bone of my bone, sinew of my sinew—and only God knows how much I love them; but now they are gone astray, and their patriotism is no longer that of Washington and Hamilton, Jefferson and Andrew Jackson."

The President-elect's children, joyfully hilarious, rushed in from their play. "Tad," the youngest, he convulsively pressed to his breast, then tossed high above his head, the little fellow coming down into his father's arms with shouts of joy and ripples of laughter. Mrs. Lincoln appeared, was introduced, and announced that supper was ready.

"Come on out, Sammy, and have a *snack* with us," said the President-elect. "But you'll have to take *pot-luck*, for," with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "the politicians have about eaten us out of house and home."

## CHAPTER VIII

THE SPY—A PARTY—AN ANGEL IN WHITE—MARJORIE

THE young lawyer was taking leave of the President-elect. "Sammy, *if war should* come, may I count on you? You know New Richmond's pretty stanchly against me."

"Mr. Lincoln," replied the young lawyer, "I fear I'm what you call a 'sectional patriot.' Hence if you ask if I'll fight to compel the South to submit to a government to which, in my humble opinion, it owes no more allegiance than the Thirteen Colonies owed to England after the Declaration of Independence, I must answer—forgive my frankness—Never! But to the question, Will I stand by you, by the Federal Government, in the event of the South's invasion of the North?—my answer of necessity would be an instant and emphatic Yes! For, Mr. Lincoln, as I view it, the North has no more right to invade and coerce the South than the South has to invade and coerce the North—than England had to invade and coerce the American Colonies from '76 to '81. You see, I'm a Democrat of the old school. However, you'll have no need of my insignificant services, for you'll have with you the whole irresistible tide and trend of the times."

Gravely taking the young lawyer's hand, Mr. Lincoln, with a smile, replied: "As the preachers say, Sammy, you're in a state of grace, and you'll—*ripen*."

The succeeding weeks at New Richmond were uneventful. The roads were muddy, the farmers busy, and the streets



were practically deserted. Even Lincoln's Eastern tour and inauguration had scarcely excited a ripple. To be sure, the air was full of rumors: That the Southern Confederacy had gone to pieces; that Lincoln had backed down and yielded up everything; that France and England had recognized the Southern Confederacy; that 100,000 men were marching northward from the Gulf and putting every Abolitionist to the sword; that Lincoln and his entire Cabinet had been assassinated; that Lincoln had sworn that he would end the whole race controversy by compelling every white man to marry a black woman, and *vice versa*; that Davis had a legion of spies in every Northern neighborhood, and that at a given signal they would rise and massacre everybody that stood by Lincoln; and that even the world was soon to come to an end—but said rumors were short-lived. It was the hush before the storm.

Armentrout was busy sharpening plows and had but little to say.

Hank Gordon was uncommunicative. When asked if he would continue as postmaster under a Black Republican administration, he replied: "By Gawd, Ah'd ruthuh be uh chambuhmaid t' 'n' el'funt th'n t' staiy hyar uh durn daiy lunguh'n Ah hez tuh!"

Mamie, his assistant, giggled. She knew his application for a renewal of his commission as postmaster at New Richmond, endorsed by Drs. Culpepper and Boynton, Hiram Goldbeck, president of the Calhoun Bank; Nic Tutwiler, Voe Bijaw, and several others, had already been forwarded to Washington. There was a rumor that Armentrout was "making a try for it," and for the honor of the town it was felt that no "upstaht blacksmith" should ever be postmaster at New Richmond.

"Nic's triflunuh thun aivuh," Mrs. Tutwiler informed the neighbors. "Baituh gun ut en single hahnus, Ah raickun."

Nic, sunning himself in front of the "hotel," stretched himself and gaped. "Oh, shucks! Nuthin' doin'," emitting with geometrical precision an enormous volume of dark, amber-colored saliva on a frog that was making for a miniature pond in the street, and taking a fresh "chaw o' dawg-laig." "Fish boitin' moighty foine, but thet raid-haidid wormun o' moine won' lut meh go. Some folks gut no feelin', daggone ut!"

Felix Palfrey was busy teaching "moo-zik an' zee lang-widge." Indeed, after a certain memorable evening, he had become the busiest man in New Richmond. And the busier he became the more multitudinous and bewildering were his gestures and grimaces, and the greater his difficulty in "spikin' or comprend-*ing* yo' zo ver' strenge Anglaise lang-widge."

But to all that was transpiring in the outer world he was seemingly utterly oblivious. "W'at ees eet all *ab-oot*?" he would anxiously inquire of some ultra-Abolitionist. And when his eager informer, kindling with wrath at the mention of Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy, had given him the last vestige of knowledge and surmise, the innocent Felix would shake his head, shrug his shoulders, and exclaim, "Eet ees all zo ver' strenge. *Je ne comprends pas!*"

One day he said to the blacksmith, "Mees-taire Armeen-troot, do yo' teenk da veel bee—ah, *var-r*?"

"Wah?" the blacksmith exploded. "Wah? Weel, Ah suld saiy! Whah yuh ben liv'n', yuh damn' li'l roont?"

"R-roont? I no comprend! Bud veel zee Nort' *vight*?"

"Foight? Yus, loike haill 'n' daimnashun!"

Instantly shoulders were a-shrug, and arms uplifted. Blank wonder and misery, pitiably ignorant, overspread his countenance. '*Sacre! Oh, mon Dieu! Grace au Ciel! Hor-ree-bl'!* Hor-ree-bl'! Den yo' favoreet, yo' Mees-taire—ah, Leen-coon, veel 'e be keel'?"

"No' by uh damsite!" shouted old Amsden.

"An' Mees-taire—ah, *Da-vees*, veel 'e nud alzo be keel'? An' all zee peopl' zo ver' niz *ar-oond* 'eer-r? An' yo' Mees-taire—ah, *Ar-meen-troot*, veel yo' nud alzo bee—ah, moor-daire'?"

That was too much for the old blacksmith. "See hyar, yuh damned li'l' goslin'. Yo' gang hame tae yuh maw 'n' taill 'er t' poot uh diapuh on yuh." Then with deep scorn added, "Ah ver' mooch feard yo' ged keel' alzo!"

"I ver' mooch t'ank yo', Mees-taire—"

"*Git!*"

If "*Mees-taire Ar-meen-feesh* — ah, troot," could have peeked through a keyhole an hour later at the boarding-house of a certain Mrs. Barnes, he would have seen the "damned li'l' goslin'" mimicking him to perfection, and roaring with laughter.

To Simonson these were busy days. His first care was for his mother, at whose call he had come to New Richmond. To leave Boston with all its advantages, the faculty, and friends he had made at Cambridge, and his already promising outlook for a successful professional career, had been a sore trial; but there had been no alternative. He had pleaded with his mother to come to Boston and make a home for him—but no. With that utterly unreasonable and inexplicable fidelity women, in every other way pliable, cling to brutal and disreputable husbands, Madge Simonson refused to abandon her life partner. Nothing would do but "Sammy" must come to her.

Nor was call or response prompted by an unusual measure of affection. She had never been an affectionate mother to him, nor had he ever felt that adoration for her that most mothers inspire in their sons. She was a woman in distress, always in distress; often vilely tongue-lashed; sometimes brutally assaulted; always neglected; frequently utterly



abandoned—that was her whole miserable history; and that constituted her sole appeal to her son. They had nothing in common. In his struggles to secure an education, and rise above his sordid surroundings, she had never in any way mothered him. Indeed, father and mother alike had constantly opposed his ambitions, put every possible obstacle in his way, and bitterly resented what they called his “high-falutin’ notions.”

But now Abe Simonson was prematurely old and broken from constant dissipation and nameless vices—a disgrace, scapegrace, and outcast—while the mother was left wholly unprovided for. To be known as their son was at once a calamity—a business handicap, and a social anathema.

Nevertheless, with grim determination and devotion to duty, “our Sammy,” as his derelict parents now maudlinly called him, had come to New Richmond to discharge the obligations of a loyal son as to worthy, honorable parents. If on his part there was lacking enthusiasm, because he had been shamefully neglected and abused in his childhood, it but adds to our sense of his high heroism and chivalry in sacrificing taste and worldly advantage to the performance of a task which many sons of excellent parents would have deemed onerous and quixotic.

*Lincoln—that face!* He was haunted by Lincoln’s face and words. But he was glad he had stood his ground with Mr. Lincoln; that he had spoken his mind frankly and fearlessly, and immeasurably glad he had been permitted to see him. States’ rights he was to the core; a Democrat by both heredity and preference; recognizing the devout patriotism of both Federal and Confederate, yet always feeling a special affection and reverence for the Confederate; with stern and equal justice vowing never to help the North coerce the South, nor the South to coerce the North; glowing with the high pride and joy in the South that, with its heaven-born

Democracy, it would never attempt to invade the North—all that!

And yet *Lincoln*; his *words*; and that *face* so quaint, and humorous, and whimsical, and grotesque—yes; and yet so strong, so pathetic, so tragic! Did anybody, *could* anybody, ever understand him? Æschylus might have fathomed him, or Socrates, or Marcus Aurelius—hardly Aurelius, he was too saturnine; Dante, more than likely—only he, too, lacked the feminine gentleness, and the happy *bon vivant*, healing and strengthening masculine grotesquery; Becket?—no.

And Lincoln had been so considerate. He had not argued with him, or disputed, or contradicted. He had even seemed glad to hear opinions contrary to those he himself cherished, and to rejoice when his pet doctrines were dealt savage blows. He now recalled the fact, blushingiy, that Lincoln had said but little, but that he himself had been very talkative and self-assertive. But if Mr. Lincoln had said but little, everything he had said had been worthy of consideration and remembrance. One remark puzzled him—the rest he thought he understood. What did Mr. Lincoln mean when he said, “You will ripen, Sammy—you will *ripen*”?

But with all his anxieties, and vexing and perplexing problems, there was also *always*, always after that first evening at Judge Gildersleeve’s, one object of supreme concern, sometimes eclipsing all else—*Marjorie*.

On the evening of the Fourth of July there was a merry party at The Maples. The rooms were decorated with mid-summer ferns and flowers, and the guests were in a festive mood. If during the day there had been restraint and anxious thoughts and forebodings, now all was dismissed. The most select people were there: the Culpeppers, Goldbecks, Gordons, Professor and Mrs. Pinckney, the Reverend and Mrs. Henry Lee Frothingay, Hugh Grant, Miss Freda

Levering and her brother Albert Sidney, just graduated from Hampden-Sidney College, and many of the younger set. The only outsiders present were Palfrey and Simonson.

Palfrey's identity and mission were known to but few. Even Professor Pinckney supposed him to be simply an erratic vagrant; poor, but not exactly indigent; gifted, almost a genius, but unpractical; Europeanly-informed, but wholly unversed in affairs American; and admitted to their circle on account of his picturesqueness, a certain foreign air and distinction, and his musical virtuosity.

Of course the young lawyer had been invited because Judge Gildersleeve had faith in him and wanted to befriend him, regardless of his disreputable parents.

To most of the guests, however, he was under suspicion—there was a rumor that he had been to see Lincoln, and that he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. True, Judge Gildersleeve's visé was sufficient; but was the Judge himself as enthusiastically loyal to the cause, and as relentless in his hostility to the tyrannical Lincoln as he ought to be? Dr. Culpepper and Voe Bijaw had their doubts.

At dinner the young lawyer was seated next to Marjorie; for which he was grateful. However, there was little chance for private conversation. The air was full of war and politics, to the true Southerner titillating and stimulating as strong liquor. Grace was hardly said before a well-known voice was heard declaiming:

"Quoth Horace, \**Jam litui strepunt; jam fulgor armorum terret fugaces equos que vultus equitum. Jam videor audire magnos duces sordidos non indecoro pulvere, et cuncta terrarum subacta.*' Thus history repeats itself, and the poet sings a deathless song."

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\* Now the clarions sound; now the glittering of arms terrifies the flying steeds and dazzles the eyes of the riders. Already I seem to hear of mighty leaders stained with no inglorious dust, and all the world subdued.



A salvo of applause rewarded the Doctor, who, continuing, said: "The Pride of the House of the Leverings is here, fresh from the classic shades of old Hampden-Sidney College. Sir, give us a sip of Sabine wine from Horace's far-famed Grecian jar."

There was another round of cheers, followed by tumultuous calls for Albert Levering.

Now, Albert was a prodigious joker, and everyone expected the good Doctor to be hoisted on his own petard; nor were they disappointed.

"Really, Dr. Culpepper, I can think of but one Horatian line."

"Let's have it!" The call was unanimous.

"Very well," and there was a look of mock solemnity on his face; "it is this: \**Vitia et modos bellicæ ludumque Fortunæ gravesque amicitias principum, et arma uncta cruoribus nondum expiatis, opus plenum periculosæ aleæ et incedis per ignes suppositos doloso cineri.*'"

"Translate! translate!" But Albert, laughing, shook his head, and the Doctor plainly was vexed.

"No matter," said the amiable hostess. "There was something in it about 'expiation,' and we can guess the rest." Albert smiled, but the Doctor looked glum.

But the conversation now was at full tide, under cover of which, Marjorie, stealing a glance at her vis-à-vis, said: "We don't see much of you, Mr. Simonson. You shouldn't hold yourself so aloof; really, Papa is a great admirer of yours."

"I am indeed grateful, Miss Marjorie. From the first I have felt that Judge Gildersleeve was my friend."

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\*The errors and the operation of war, and of the sport of Fortune, and of the fatal confederacies of the chiefs, and of dangerous hazard; and thou walkest over fires concealed beneath treacherous ashes.

"Oh, but it isn't confined to Papa. Brother Fred swears by you, and so——"

"Marjorie!" It was Harold Culpepper speaking. The young lawyer was inwardly wrathful, and Marjorie only faintly smiled as she looked up.

"I say this is our eighty-fifth Independence Day, and Lela disputes my word; and so I—I just thought I would—would leave it to you."

"It isn't so, Marjorie," retorted Lela Frothingway. "It's just because Harold's——"

"No matter, Lela——" But Marjorie's voice was drowned by a gale of laughter excited by a witty remark of Felix Palfrey's.

"I'm not versed in the silken and perfumed phrases of the courtier," the young lawyer resumed, "and what I'm going to say now I would not say for a long time, never, perhaps, only we don't meet very often. And it's this: I have known just one happy hour in my life, and for that I am indebted to you. Forgive me! I had no right to say it."

Marjorie's face was lowered to a rose, as though she were examining its petals. "That's the dearest speech to which I ever listened." Her voice had sunk to a whisper. "But why shouldn't we meet oftener?"

"Oh, there are many reasons, Miss Gildersleeve, which, for the moment, you generously forget, or waive aside."

"Name some of them, please," still examining the rose, but now there was a smile in the corners of her eyes. "Name some of them," she repeated.

For the moment he was nonplused. The challenge was unexpected. Then, with a glance at the notable families present, a look Marjorie did not fail to observe, he said: "Well, I do not belong to the F. F. V.'s, or the F. F. K.'s, or the F. F.'s of anywhere."

"Neither did the *Founder* of any great House. You know there always has to be a *beginning*. Even the Amazon must have its fountain-head. Go on!"

"You're making fun of me."

"I'm not—pardon me. What are these idlers and dawdlers about us, who have accomplished nothing compared with those obscure forbears who gave significance to the terms you use? Go on, please."

"Well—culture."

"A. B.—Harvard; LL.B.—Harvard; Barrister—Supreme Court; Traveler. Go on."

The young lawyer was blushing. "Then, Miss Gildersleeve, I am lacking in social culture. Look at your brother Fred, at Palfrey, at Mr. Harold Culpepper. They know how to be entertaining—I do not."

She lifted her eyes to her fiancé, and, without removing them, said: "I shall never forget that *first* night; I was never so intensely interested in my life."

There was a movement toward the parlor. Palfrey was going to sing.

"I say, Marjorie," said Hugh Grant, approaching and bowing to the young lawyer, "you and Simonson here have been positively funereal all evening. What have you been talking about?—holding an inquest?"

"How gruesome, Hugh!" exclaimed Freda Levering. "On whom or what could they be holding an inquest, pray?"

"Oh, the Union, of course. Quoth Horace—didn't you hear him? 'Dead, deader,' he said, 'than a cat scourged of its ninth life.'"

"Oh, Hugh, how can you speak so lightly?" Hugh and Freda passed on.

Just then Harold approached and, with an air of proprietorship, said: "Come on, Marjorie. Will have to have an introduction to you next. Palfrey is going to sing as soon as we quiet down."



As Marjorie took her escort's arm she turned toward the young lawyer, as if to adjust an ornament on her sleeve, and quietly said: "I have something I wish to say to you tonight before you go." Harold for the moment was replying to a question asked by the rector's wife, and did not observe what was going on.

Palfrey sang song after song, and after each was roundly applauded. By most of the guests he was regarded with mingled mirth and wonder. He was so *naïve*, so innocent, so helpless, and yet so good-natured, they could not refrain from liking him. They felt free to bate him, to mercilessly jibe him because they thought they could neither hurt his feelings nor awaken resentment. They were sure the keenest scimiter of wit could not pierce the armor of his ignorance of "zee zo ver' strenge Anglais lang-widge."

"Say, Hugh, who is this funny little foreigner, anyhow?"

"Freda," replied Hugh, with a grave countenance, "he's the missing link. On all-fours you'd take him for a monkey; on twos-only you'd take him for a man. Again: humor him and you'd call him an angel; contrary him and you'd know he's a devil. In short, my dear, he's a sort of floating rib—lost—lost somewhere between the biliary-duct and the gall-bladder."

"But be serious, won't you? Is he just a crazy music-master and language-teacher, and nothing more? *Tell me!*"

"I'm yours to command, Freda, but now you ask of me the impossible. Whom do the folks think he is, if he is other than whom he pretends to be?"

"Some think he's Mr. Lincoln's representative; others say he's an emissary direct from Jefferson Davis."

"Knows too much to be here for Jeff Davis; doesn't know enough to represent Abraham Lincoln."

"Why, Hugh, you talk like Amsden Armentrout."

"Lots of bigger fools than old Ams."

"Then you—why, you—why, Hugh, presently you'll be shouting for Lincoln."

"Lots of folks have shouted for worse men."

Freda Levering was very happy. At heart she was a devout lover of the Union. Of all men, she most revered Lincoln; but of this she had to remain silent. Had old Joel Levering, her father, known it, he would have disowned her.

Between Palfrey's performances, Dr. Culpepper was discoursing, to a more or less interested group, on Beauregard, the fall of Sumter, the removal of the Confederate capital to Richmond; Lincoln, Davis; the treatment of the Confederate peace commissioners, and the probable action of Congress, which had met in session extraordinary that day. The young lawyer listened with deep attention, but added nothing. At times he felt an attempt was being made to draw him out, and that he was being watched. Harold and Marjorie had left the room.

"An' now I zing onl' una more piez," said Felix, turning on the stool. "W'at yu zay eet ees? Eet ees yu Indpend-enz Day, zee—ah, Juillet zee Fort; zee, ah, le Quatrienne? Zhall eet bee 'Zee Un-ion Forev-aire,' or 'Zee Bang Star Ban-naire'? *Oui, oui, assurément!* 'Zee Spang Star Ban-naire!'"

"Damn the Union!" roared Dr. Culpepper. "Damn the Star Spangled Banner! The Southern Confederacy!—all hail the Stars and Bars!"

"Hoo-dy dae, fouks." Armentrout was standing at the door, hat in hand. "Ah juist ca'd, Jedge, tae awsk gin Ah maus hae thum papuhs 'knowl'ged 'foah uh Notuhry. Didna ken yir hed coomp'ny er Ah wudna coom, though Ah dae loov zee guid moo-zik."

Felix gleefully clapped his hands and declared it was "una gud, ah, jo-ak"; and Judge Gildersleeve would have invited

the blacksmith in, but he had departed at once, as uncere-  
moniously as he had appeared.

Off to one side, Dr. Culpepper was saying, \**"Notat de designat oculis ad caedam unumquemque nostrum."*

"Oh, not so bad as that, I hope, dear Doctor," said young Levering. "Why, you're more worked up over the War, and are by far more acrid and bellicose, than the people down South. And as for old Amsden—why, he's a *corker*! And as to *my* patriotism, don't worry. Wrote to Bobby Lee the other day and told him that when he needed me, just to let me know—that no Levering ever went back on old Virginia."

"All right, Al, my boy. Of course you're above suspicion, but that's more than can be said for *some* folks," looking toward a group composed, among others, of Judge Gilder-sleeve, Hugh Grant, and Samuel Simonson. "By the way, Al, Captain Grant started with a regiment yesterday from Camp Yates, at Springfield, to Quincy. Guess there'll be fighting pretty soon in Missouri."

There was commotion and a gale of laughter at the door.

"Gentlemen and ladies, all hail!" making a sweeping bow to everybody in the room. It was Vergie Culpepper, who had been to another party with Rodney Clarke.

For a moment the teacher of "*zee moo-zik an' lang-zwidge*" forgot himself. Under her spell he arose, bowed with courtly deference, and, in perfect English, replied, "Fairest Venus, Queen of the Day, Empress of the Night, adored of all the Seasons, we do you homage!"

It was all very theatrical, melodramatic; but only Vergie and the young lawyer heard and marked it all. Palfrey's totally unexpected speech and manner were a revelation to the young lawyer. He now remembered Freda Levering's

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\* He notes and marks out with his eyes each of us for slaughter.



question addressed to Hugh Grant earlier in the evening, and which, in passing, he had overheard. Now the question kept ringing, "Hugh, who is this funny little fellow, anyhow?"

Vergie, christened Virginia Lee, daughter of Dr. Fairfax Culpepper and his wife, Charlotte Pulford, had a striking personality. In appearance she might have claimed kinship with the lords of the Mediterranean when Greece and Rome ruled the world—perhaps a daughter of Aspasia, or Hypatia, or Zenobia, or Cleopatra. She had inherited a superb physique, tall and commanding, which a care-free, outdoor life had ripened to perfection. Her father sometimes playfully called her a "buccaneer," perhaps because an ancestor in command of a British ship had turned pirate and become a terror. Her luxuriant jet-black hair and large, flashing black eyes accentuated the beauty of her small, even, milk-white teeth. Her dark olive complexion glowed with health, while her full, cupid-curved, cherry-red lips told of slumbering passion. Lithe, intense, there was a feline grace in all her movements. Vital—no other word could so well express it. There was neither absence nor lack of any of the virtues or graces essential to the most ideal womanhood, yet there was always an added plus-measure of physical vitality. Had she been an evil woman the havoc she would have wrought would have been immeasurable and irreparable. Her excess of vitality fairly electrified the air about her, while her beauty and symmetry lent wings to men's imaginations. Happily married, she would have become not unlike Cornelia and given to the world a race not inferior to the Gracchi.

She was educated. Her father, genially yclept "Quoth Horace," had thoroughly grounded her in Latin. Her mother, a graduate of the famous *Ecole de l'Etoile*, in Paris, had perfected her in French. In other studies her standing had been high. She was a daring horse-woman, danced

superbly, like her father was fond of politics, and was witty and brilliant in conversation. Though only twenty, she knew herself, and was as chaste as she was fascinating.

For the first time she thought herself in love; and because she could not be openly courted, and as openly respond, she was desperate. Hers was a glorious love for which any king might well have waived aside a crown. The wild buccaneering discords of her regnant nature had been touched to an equally wild but now exquisitely harmonized rhapsody of tender emotion. Felix Palfrey's ancestry had captured her fancy; his broad views, knowledge of the world, and devotion to the Southern cause, had captivated her intellect; his perfect culture—always gallant and chivalrous, yet never overdoing or underdoing anything—had completed her artistic conquest.

Half-listening to Rodney Clarke, and making random responses, she was contrasting Felix and the young lawyer, who were conversing but a few feet distant. Marking the young lawyer's leonine head and rugged features; body towering head and shoulders above her lover; surcharged, like herself, with physical vitality; speaking straight out and with no interlarding of foreign words or phrases; making but few gestures, which, though sometimes awkward, were always strong and forceful, there gradually stole over her a physical sensation, not yet psychically analyzed, of his superior height and girth and vitality and passion, more nearly equal than Palfrey's to her own; superior to anything she could ever hope for, and she felt for the masterful young lawyer a sudden in-rush of hatred.

It was no fault of the young lawyer's that he was as he was; nevertheless, she wanted to wound him, torture him, see him writhe; it would afford her relief, even happiness, to see him suffer, *agonize*. If she could only lower his imperious spirit, make him an object of ridicule! Suddenly

the evil one gave her an inspiration—it must have been the evil one—and, without waiting for the sobering second thought, she said:

“Oh, Mr. Simonson.” Her voice was strangely loud and raucous, and everyone’s attention was instantly arrested. The young lawyer bowed and gave her respectful attention.

“I saw your father, old Abe Simonson, tonight.”

The young lawyer paled, but made no response.

“Yes; I saw him—*drunk as usual*. The town-marshal had him under arrest, and was taking him to the *calaboose*.”

In an instant Dr. Culpepper was at her side. “Come with me, Virginia”—his voice was cruelly stern. Then to the young lawyer he said, “Mr. Simonson, as Virginia’s father I beg your pardon, sir; when she has recovered her right mind she shall make fitting apology to you in person.” Then turning away, he said, “Come, Charlotte; come, Harold; our family is in disgrace. We will go home now.”

Even before the Culpeppers had unceremoniously departed, Judge Gildersleeve had reached the young lawyer’s side, and, with a grieved voice, said:

“That our guest, here at the solicitation of my entire family, should have been so grossly and wantonly insulted, fills us, overwhelms us, with deepest grief. The shame is ours, not his. I hardly need remind you that duty, no less than honorable inclination, will require that no mention be made of what has occurred here tonight; to this I add my personal injunction. I shall now bid you good-night, and request the honor of Mr. Simonson’s company in the library, where my family presently will join us.”

Gallantly offering his arm to the young lawyer, he escorted him to the library. The other guests quietly took their leave.

Half an hour later, as the young lawyer was taking his leave of Marjorie in the hall, Marjorie gently said:

“Mr. Simonson, will you take my hand?” There were



tears in her eyes, and the young lawyer, as in a dream, took her extended hand.

"To all Papa and Mama and Fred have expressed by word and deed, I want to add this for myself: I, Marjorie Gildersleeve, will *always* be your sworn friend and ally; I shall *always* shield and defend you, you dear, brave, noble boy; and I shall always *pray* God to bless and keep you.—Good-night."

They were alone. Her lithe, willowy, queenly body was very close to him, and the odor of violets rose from her hair. Unconsciously she had placed both her hands on his arm. Her face was uplifted,—beautiful, yet pale, pitiful, beseeching. Tears yet lingered on her cheeks; in her eyes he caught a glimpse of something more than pity, and he was suddenly conscious of an overmastering tumult of soul,—love, madness, soul-hunger, holy awe, adoration. A thousand voices within him cried, "Marjorie, Marjorie, I love you, I love you; I cannot live without you!" Tremblingly, haltingly, scarce knowing what he did, his arms encircled her, drew her to him; she unresisting. Silently, wordlessly, as angels might take a holy sacrament, their lips met in one long, soul-satisfying kiss. Pillowing her head on his breast, her arms stole about his neck in a fervent, lingering embrace—how long, neither of them knew nor cared. Then gently untwining her arms and putting her away from him, holding her at arm's length, he said:

"Now indeed must I beg your forgiveness; but a life spent in penitential expiation would be but a trifling penalty for what has been—*heaven* to me."

"The sin is all mine, if it be a sin; and I suppose it *is* a sin; for," Marjorie went on unflinchingly, "I am pledged to marry Mr. Culpepper, and I should loathe myself if I *were* ever to be recreant to a solemn vow. But, Sammy,

dear, 'twas all my fault. I *meant* for you to do just what you did."

"But, now," and her voice was low and tremulous, "as Papa was saying this evening of another matter, "let *this* be as though it had never been. Let us ever be," and she was now holding both his hands, "the best, the nearest and dearest and truest of friends! And as I said that other time: Let come what will, of woe or weal, I shall always be on your side."

The sultry July night was inky-black. The clouds were lowering, and in the northwest an ominous storm was brewing. An occasional *avant courier* of lightning dashed forth in advance of the whirling, swirling, seething tempest, then furiously dashed back again; while the sharp, piercing echoes of the hoofs of steeds of fire trembled a moment in the troubled air, reëchoed, then sullenly died away. The air was motionless, save now and then a fitful gust of wind, seemingly half thrust forward, then fiercely restrained and drawn back, leaving behind a melancholy complaint or prophecy of dire disaster.

Groping, doubtly-blinded, the young lawyer had just reached the gate leading up the long avenue of maples to the Gildersleeve Mansion, when he heard a footfall. He paused a moment, breathlessly, and listened. There's something uncanny about such nights; then even the bravest are conscious of a momentary, nameless terror—besides, the young lawyer was entirely unstrung.

"'Tis I, Sammy," came a low voice. "I couldn't let you go till I—I said—something."

She was now before him, though he could only see the vague outline of the white gown she wore, and the nebulous contour of her face and head. "O Sammy, it can't be—what I said. I—I couldn't be your friend—and go on living like that—you know. We must be just—just strangers. You

won't blame—blame me, will you? But I must take it all back—what I said. I can't always be by your side, and—and—— O Sammy, please won't you, just once more, since you're n-never to come back again; won't you please—pl——”

“In God's name, Miss Gildersleeve, *Marjorie*—will you break my heart, crush out my very life?”

“But w-won't you, please——”

“What, *darling*? I don't understand.”

“W-won't you please, just once more, hold me in your arms, and k-kiss me—just as you d-did a w-while ago?”

Yet standing in the gate ten minutes later he saw her, just an instant, as she stood alone at the door in the blinding glare of a sudden deluge of lightning—looking toward him as if in everlasting farewell; and then she entered the house.

To the young lawyer it seemed he had had a vision of an angel robed in white, with flowing tresses of burnished gold, and a face seraphic but—unspeakably *sorrowful*.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONSCIENCE SCOURGED—AN UPROAR IN NEW RICHMOND

EARLY the following morning Dr. Culpepper and Harold called on Samuel Simonson to make the *amende honorable* for the lamentable occurrence at Judge Gildersleeve's, though there was little to be said.

"My daughter, sir," said Dr. Culpepper, with deep emotion, "has wounded you most grievously. For her offense, so utterly without warrant or provocation, there can be no excuse or palliation. I can only say, sir, that we deplore it, more than I can find language to express. Fortunately, you suffer only a transient annoyance. For you the unhappy incident is already but a fleeting memory, happily presently to be forgotten; for, believe me, we esteem you highly. But for us there can be no erasure or forgetting of the fact that a beloved member of our family has been guilty of a most atrocious outrage. Our only consolation is, though a sorrowful one, my daughter at the time was not mentally responsible. Something, unknown to us, has unsettled her mind. Besides, she now is very ill. Indeed, at midnight her condition was so alarming I summoned Dr. Boynton, who is still at her bedside."

Harold added: "Mother and I are deeply grieved, and earnestly crave your merciful consideration."

The young lawyer thanked them for their courtesy, assured them he felt no animosity, expressed the hope that Miss Culpepper's illness would be of brief duration, and felt relieved when they departed.

"It was damnable," said Hugh Grant, who called a little later; "but Vergie always was queer. Pure as an angel, proud as a peacock, and high-tempered as the devil." The young lawyer smiled.

"And beautiful—*distressingly* handsome! And passion—she's a tigress; belongs to the genus *Felis*. Why, were she to fall in love with a man, she'd pounce on him and—and *devour* him, then penitently grieve herself to death. The matter with her is, she's too . . . . *vital*; needs a husband like Petruchio, and some—*babies*. Vitality in a woman is all right, but when one can't touch her without being volted over, and his nerves being set to tingling like telegraph-wires on a stormy night, and his brain being electrolyzed till his imagination runs riot and takes leave of reason——" Words failed him.

"But what I came up to say is, every son and daughter of us there last night is for you. After leaving the Judge's the whole party dropped in at Freda's and joined in a conspiracy. Now, don't \*'concurus bonorum omnium' or 'hic munitissimus habendi senatus locus' us. Rest assured, Simonson, there was no Vargunteius or Cornelius or Quintus Curius there, and of Fulvias there is none in New Richmond. Al Levering made a little speech—you know, Al's just home from Hampden-Sidney College—and said you were an honor to the community; that you were always honor-bright; that your blood and brain and brawn had no yellow streak or splotch; and that you *might* be a John-brownist and a Wendellphillipist and a Williamlloydgarrisonist and an Abrahamlincolnist all in one—and, you know, folks will talk, old man—you were nevertheless a scholar and a gentleman, and that he, for one, proposed to stand by you. And Freda, the little minx, jumped to her feet

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\* The assembly of all the good.

• This most fortified place of holding the senate.

and said, "Many's in favor of the *motion*, stand up!" And, do you know, every sonuvagun 'n daughteruvagoddess was standing quicker'n a wink."

There were other callers, all expressing deepest sympathy. Under ordinary circumstances such an outpouring of sympathy would have been infinitely comforting, and such assurances of confidence and esteem would have both cheered and strengthened him; but now words seemed to have lost their normal potency. He could understand their meaning, but could not feel their force or sequence. He observed the long second-hand of the clock completing the circumference of the dial in three mighty strides, twenty seconds to a stride, but was not conscious of the flight of time. The room was growing chill; he felt the discomfort, but did not observe the open window, though he was looking at it.

The clock on the mantel tirelessly, ceaselessly, droned, "Tick-tock, tock-tick, tick-tock; tock-tick"; so something within him—something he couldn't control—kept repeating, "Vergie-Marjorie, Marjorie-Vergie."

Vergie Culpepper had dealt him a stunning blow; and the method and manner with which she had done it caused him to writhe. Yet there was no feeling of resentment—only the horror of it; and the almost unendurable pain. Why did she so hate him? Why had she assailed him? Why had she chosen such a time and place to pour upon him the phials of her contemptuous wrath and scorn? Vainly he sought an answer. He had accepted her father's explanation, but all the while he knew better. She hated him deeply, malevolently, furiously—he knew it. But *why*? And thus his mind went the weary round like one lost in a maze.

Occasionally he thought of Marjorie, and this was even more painful because it brought self-accusation and remorse. Writhing at the remembrance of Vergie's vitriolic taunt, he could cool and soothe his burning anguish with self-pity. He



was innocent; had done her no wrong. Yes, as Hugh had said, "Vergie's a tigress," and she had plunged her cruel fangs into his very soul—and that, too, without provocation; even her father and brother had said so.

But Marjorie! Against her he had *sinned*. She for whom he would have died—it's a strong word, but in this case not too strong—he had betrayed. He was not a *rouê*, nor had he committed the unpardonable sin. But lips that were not his to kiss, that were pledged to another, he had kissed, not once only, but many times, not conventionally, but in a very tempest of passion. Likewise a form pledged to another, that he knew was pledged to another, he had held in his arms, madly pressed to his bosom. A priceless, irrestorable treasure he had taken; to his account he charged a sacrilege for which there could be no atonement.

And the manner of it! He had taken advantage of her tender compassion; had answered pity with outrage. Her noble soul had clothed him with all the attributes of knight-hood and he had proved himself a rake. True, she had absolved him; like a glorious expiating priestess, she had taken the guilt upon herself; but that did not make his act any less criminal, or his crime any less flagitious.

"Who am I, what am I," he mercilessly questioned himself, "that I should visit wrath upon Virginia Culpepper, when, in the sight of heaven, I am guilty of an offense so much more heinous?"

Late in the afternoon Judge Gildersleeve called. The Judge was very kind, very gentle, very solemn—unusually so. He wasted no time on preliminaries.

"Sammy, I've called on business. It's in a manner confidential. Are we quite alone?"

"Yes, Judge," wonderingly; "and to secure ourselves from interruption, I'll close and lock the door."

"You remember, Sammy, Cæsar begins his brochure, *De*

*Bello Gallico*, by saying, \*'Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres'; so what I have to say comes under three heads."

"First, I want to ask a favor of you." He paused, slowly filled the bowl of his pipe, ignited a match on his trouser-leg, and, after a few vigorous whiffs, continued, "Sammy, I want you to share my office with me."

The young lawyer opened his mouth to reply, but the old Judge stopped him.

"You haven't heard all the evidence in the case," gravely. "When I leased my suite over the bank, I thought Fred would study law with me and ultimately become my partner. This he has decided not to do; so I have an unoccupied room. I might take a student, but I don't care to do that. What I want is some one that is companionable, with whom I can converse, and with whom I can consult, in whom I can confide, and who is agreeable to my family. Occasionally, too, I need an expert opinion, a precedent that is not worn threadbare—a decision handed down by some great Greek or Roman or English jurist unknown to our courts. You see, I'm a little vain of my reputation, but, if I do say it myself, my standing is rather high at Springfield; and even Justice Taney the other day quoted one of my decisions. Now, I'd really like to form a partnership with you. 'Gildersleeve & Simonson' wouldn't look bad, eh, Sammy? But as I am on the bench, that wouldn't do. However, there's no reason why we shouldn't work together, assuming that you are willing; and for your services I'll pay you any amount you may require."

The young lawyer's torture was intense. The old Judge was so gentle and lovable; his faith in him, though a comparative stranger, was so complete! "Oh, if he but knew, if he but *knew*—Marjorie—if Marjorie were to *tell* her father—if——"

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\* All Gaul is divided into three parts.

"Then, Sammy, another thing: I saw Herndon the other day—you know the firm, 'Lincoln & Herndon.' Well, it seems Lincoln has instructed Herndon to make use of you in government cases coming before the courts in Southern Illinois—just why, I don't know—and Herndon didn't know. Anyhow, Herndon wanted to know how you were *panning* out, and I told him it would be impossible to find a better man—that you knew law, were equally effective before judge and jury, and that there was that about you that always inspired confidence. Herndon was highly pleased, and said, 'Old Abe is a wonderful judge of men,' and promised to write to you in a few days."

The Judge paused to knock the ashes out of his pipe, and to help himself to a small quantity of fine-cut.

"Personally, I think I can turn some business your way. Our people are pretty hot-headed, and there's a good deal of litigation—too much. The best two foreign clients are the Illinois Central and the National Collectors' Association. Rod Clarke—you remember him—he was with Vergie Culpepper last night—is the attorney for both corporations, but they're dissatisfied with him. I've already written to Edsall in Chicago, and Mansfield at Cincinnati, suggesting that you are the man they need."

"But, Judge," said the young lawyer, staggered by his access of good fortune, no less than by the fatherly interest the Judge was taking in him, "What will Mr. Clarke say?"

"No matter what he says. He's a dude. He's a dodgasted liar. He's in debt to everybody in New Richmond."

The young lawyer was amused at the sudden and unusual ire of the Judge.

"But the Culpeppers? Clarke seems to be pretty intimate with them. Will they not resent any displacement of him?"

"Intimate with the Culpeppers? Clarke? Sammy, he isn't fit to be their doormat. The Culpeppers are the salt



of the earth—even that infernal Vergie that kicked up such a rumpus last night. She's a Venus and a Pandora, Cleopatra and Penelope in one. Don't get mad at me, Sammy. What she said and did last night won't hurt you. It's going to help you. Hoped Fred would take a notion to Vergie, for a year of married life and a baby would put her right, and then—what a woman she would be! But Fred got to singing in old Frothingay's choir, and of course that finished him. Never knew it to fail. The stage setting in a church is perfect. Dimly lighted room; pictured saints; low, soft music; hushed throng; perfumed and incense-laden air; flowing, mysterious vestments; flowers, golden vessels, and emotion-appealing discourse; minister's daughter with Madonna-like face, folded hands, and eyes gentle—oh, so gentle and sorrowful—uplifted to heaven in prayer—it always brings 'em. Not saying anything against Lela. Mighty fine girl! But somehow we had our hearts set on Vergie; but Vergie—well, she's never cared for anybody. Rod Clarke? Let's not mention him again.

"Now, Sammy, there's another matter, and I hardly know how or where to begin. It's concerning politics and the war." The Judge sighed and looked troubled.

"Many of us pinned our faith to Judge Douglas; but now that he is dead I don't know what will become of us. Logan's a firebrand, Robinson's too young and inexperienced, McClernand's out for fame and glory, while his successor, W. J. Allen, is an *accident*. The truth is, we Democrats haven't a leader left. Alas, alas, that Douglas should have died—and just when we needed him most!

"I'm a Virginian, a States' Rights man, and, I suppose, a rebel; but, paramountly, I am a patriot. As to slavery, I hate it, as Culpepper hates it; but in equal measure I hate divorce and the saloon. Of the three evils I think slavery is the least. Our rector took me to task the other day for

admitting that slavery is an evil, and went on to show that while divorce and drink are anathematized by the Bible, slavery, in fact, is a divine institution; and Dr. Frothingay is not only a very learned man but, also, a very godly man.

"The so-called 'victims' of the slavery institution are not mistreated; they're not clamoring for emancipation; and yet the very heavens are rent with appeals for the destruction of the slavery-evil. Why not raise the slogan, 'Down with the divorce-evil;' or 'Exterminate the saloon-evil?' *They* have *real* victims; and their victims do suffer—perish both soul and body. We're told that slavery is a moral issue, and may be so. But are not saloon and divorce also moral questions?

"Again, Sammy: Is there any charge that the slaveholder is not law-abiding? Not one—only he wants to extend slavery over new territory. But is the saloon law-abiding? Are the patrons of the divorce court exemplars of purity? And do they not imperil the very foundation of government? Why not send an army to close the divorce courts, and to exterminate the liquor traffic, root and branch? But Northern states, Illinois and Massachusetts included, claiming the inalienable right of self-government, propose to subjugate the Southern states, and denounce their honorable, God-fearing men and women as 'insurgents,' 'rebels,' 'traitors.' Should not moral cleansing, no less than charity, begin at home? Shall we sally forth to cast the mote from the eyes of the Southern people while our own vision is blurred by the beams of greater evils?

"But pardon me, Sammy. I have but one piece of advice and it is this: Keep out of politics, keep out of the *muss!*"

"But, Judge Gildersleeve, why this warning? Am I under suspicion? Have I done anything wrong?"

"Sammy," and the Judge was eyeing him keenly, "you *are* under suspicion. You remember your humorous re-

joinders down at The Maples that first evening when Harold, the whelp, my future son-in-law, so fiercely catechized you—just like the Culpeppers!" Once more his face was covered with a genial smile. "Well, your replies have been quoted and commented on throughout our New Richmond Southern Confederacy, and you're decidedly under suspicion.

"Then our friend Armentrout, good a man as ever lived and the most oppugnacious, every time your name's mentioned wags his head in a manner that seems to say, 'I know a thing or two if only I were a-mind to tell them.'

"Finally, there's a rumor abroad that you're in communication with Lincoln, some put it stronger than that, and that you've actually accepted his hospitality at Springfield.

"Forgive me, Sammy, for gossiping so much; but I don't want you to make any mistakes. Now I must hurry home and give Marjorie a little airing. She's not well to-day—pale as a ghost. All upset I reckon over Vergie's conduct last night. Good-bye, Sammy. I'll send my man around to-morrow to move your books, desk, and household deities." Then with an irresistible grimace, humorously suggestive of Dr. Culpepper: "*Quoth Horace, \*Carpe diem credula quam minimum postero.\**"

The young lawyer was duly settled in the room in which Marjorie on the day of his arrival had overheard the conversation between himself and her father; but there was little business. Now the sole occupation of the people, and theme of conversation, was war and politics. Congress was in session, transacting business with unparalleled celerity, in twenty-nine working days enacting seventy-six laws, all save four pertaining to the war. The air was rife with inflammatory oratory, in and out of Congress, North and

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\* Enjoy the present, trusting as little as possible to the future.



South. Midway of the brief session of Congress the Battle of Bull Run was fought in hearing and almost in sight of Washington—and the Northern troops were hurled back into the Federal Capital. A wave of dejection had swept over the North; and a fierce thrill of exultation had heightened the cheer and confidence of the South, and of Southern sympathizers in the North; to be followed by fury in the South and grave uncertainty in the North when Congress, a few days later, enacted a law freeing all negroes employed in the service of the Confederate Army—a law against which Mr. Lincoln protested, but dared not veto. A call had gone forth for three-year men and McClellan, now in command of the Army of the Potomac, was busy resolving heterogeneous farmers, merchants, clerks, shopkeepers, and artisans, into homogeneous soldiers, and welding thousands of independent individualistic atoms into a vast cohesive, organic army—justifying Meade's remark afterward that "had there been no McClellan there could have been no Grant, for the army made no essential improvement under any of his successors." National patriots in the North: Lincoln, Baker, Cameron, Ramsey, Logan; and State patriots in the South: Davis, Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Albert Sidney Johnston, Polk, brave as a soldier in the Confederate Army as he had been devout as a bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church, were exalting their respective causes, and exhorting their fellow-countrymen not to be derelict in the performance of duty. South of the Ohio and Potomac the loud incessant cry was, "On to Washington!" always answered in the North by an equally emphatic slogan, "On to Richmond!" Even the placid quiet of languorous summer days in Raleigh County was broken, faintly at first, furiously the following year, by the clarion calls of Noss and Blavey and their allies.

In the meantime where was Felix Palfrey? The day

after the Battle of Bull Run *The Cackler*, Voe Bijaw's paper, briefly announced that Monsieur Felix Palfrey had returned to Paris but would be back late in the autumn. Ordinarily he could have gone to Paris or Timbuctoo without remark or observation; but after the Fourth-of-July party at Judge Gildersleeve's he had undergone a singular transformation. After that event he was rarely seen on the streets, and those who met him observed that he no longer indulged in his usual airy persiflage. Mrs. Barnes, his garrulous landlady, remarked that "zee leetl' moon-key," mimicking him, "hed became ez sollum ez a jedge." An equally garrulous servant at The Elms averred that the music-master had not left Miss Vergie's bedside from the time she was stricken till he had left permanently, three weeks later. After his ostensible departure to Paris stock-buying *voyageurs* protested that they had seen him at Sardis, Patmos, Claudia, Rapidan, Eutopolis, Athens, Cleopas, and elsewhere, but now in fashionable attire, speaking English fluently, and always looking for good opportunities for investments. These reports, however, were given little credence.

There was one report, however, that was indisputable. The Reverend Henry Lee Frothingay had been invited to officiate at the dedication of a church-edifice at Richmond the second Sabbath in September. While at the Confederate Capital he had called on President Davis. It was a very warm day and President Davis had invited him to a seat on the lawn. While engaged in conversation with his distinguished host, who should pass by but Felix Palfrey, in company with Mr. Benjamin, then Mr. Davis' Attorney-General. The two were received at the door of the executive mansion by Mrs. Davis. Of all this the reverend gentleman was absolutely sure—declared, with all the emphasis permissible to the cloth, that he simply could not have been mistaken.

The day the Rector returned to New Richmond the sportive God of Chance was in a merry mood, and immediately began to add to the gaiety of affairs. The holy man of the church, entirely devoted to the Southern cause, and equally innocent of worldly guile, had, as his sole companion in the Enochsburg stage, a certain Amsden Armentrout, into whose wide-open and ever-open ears he poured the story of his visit to the Confederate Capital. For the time he had forgotten, being absorbed in things spiritual, that there are also things temporal, even the scourge of politics and the fiery flail of war—nor did it occur to him that his traveling companion was a bitter Abolitionist, and would be only too eager, should the opportunity present itself, to take advantage of his enthusiastic loquacity.

“An’ did ye see Pris’din’ Davus, Doctuh Frothingay? S’pose no. Thae saiy ’e unly sees th’ maist prom’nun’ fouk.”

“Oh, yes, indeed,” replied the shepherd of the flock, more than ever pleased with himself. “I even had a long conversation with him.”

“W’y!”—with a deep intake of breath, indicative of amazement that a New-Richmonder should have been the recipient of such a signal honor—“div ye mean tae saiy thet ye haed uh preevet au’jence ut th’ Zec’tuve Mainshun?”

“Certainly! The day was very warm and the President invited me to be seated with him on a rustic seat on the lawn. And, while we were conversing, just as we are now, whom, Mr. Armentrout, do you suppose I saw? Guess!”

“Naebody Ah uvur seed, Ah raickun.”

“Oh, yes, you have—another New Richmond man!”

“’Deed! Bu’ ye-’ill hae t’ tull meh. Pores’ guessuh ’n th’ warl’!” The blacksmith now was all attention, every nerve keyed to the highest tension.

“Well, sir, it was my organist, Monsieur Felix Palfrey.”

“Noo—ye dinna saiy. W’y ye maus ’a’ ben dreamun’,



Doctuh," continued the wily Scot, "f'r Maister Pahlfruh's gane beck tae Pahrse. Ye ken thet yersel'."

"But I was *not* mistaken, Mr. Armentrout," a trifle nettled by the doubt cast on his perspicacity or veracity, or both. "Do you not suppose I'd know my own organist? True, he was not dressed as we have been accustomed to seeing him; he was dressed in a manner befitting one who is the guest of a great Ruler."

"W'at, Doctuh Frothingay! Div ye mean tae saiy thet yir org'nus wes thae *guest* o' th' Pris'dun'? Coom noo. Ye sartinly dinna spec uh plain man lak meh tae b'lieve *thet*!"

Angered by his fellow-passenger's unbelief the Rector retorted, "Believe it or not, just as you like. *I* was *there*, and *Palfrey* was *there*. He came with Mr. Benjamin and was welcomed, in person, by the First Lady of the Land. I also saw President Davis smile his welcome to my organist, and could easily see that Monsieur Palfrey, to both President and Mrs. Davis, was *persona gratissima*."

"Oh, sartinly, Doctuh. Ah baig yir pahdon, rivirind suh, Ah baig yir pahdon. O' coose Ah believe yuh."

"Thank you, sir. What I say is true as gospel, and I simply could not have been mistaken."

The holy man now was all-complacent, and indulged in not a little facetiæ. To the pleasure derived from the simulated homage of the canny Scot was added the glow of anticipated adulation when, among his ardent co-Southerners at New Richmond, he should relate in detail all the events of his memorable pilgrimage to the High Priest, and Holy of Holies, of the Southern Confederacy. Never was man doomed to a bitterer disappointment.

The Enochsburg stage left Enochsburg at 9 a. m. and arrived at New Richmond at noon; left New Richmond at 3 p. m. and arrived at Enochsburg at 5:30—the horses always returning in half an hour's less time.

Before night all New Richmond was in an uproar.

When the Rector proudly told of seeing Palfrey at President Davis' residence in Richmond, and how surprised he had been to see him there, Dr. Culpepper immediately said: "Excuse me, Dr. Frothingay, but please do not mention that fact again. If the Abolitionists were to get hold of it, especially that canting old hypocrite, Amsden Armentrout, all hell would turn loose in this town in less than twenty-four hours. I now see our mistake. We should have confided to you Palfrey's identity and mission; but we never dreamed that such a thing would happen. I fear, Reverend sir, you have ruined us."

"But, Doctor," exclaimed the astonished rector, "Mr. Armentrout already knows everything; you see we came over from Enochsburg together in the stage."

"And you told him you saw Palfrey at Richmond, and that he was at the Executive Mansion, and that he was *persona gratissima* to President and Mrs. Davis?"

"Certainly; all of which is God's own truth."

"Yes, damn you, and you are the devil's own fool, with cap and bells and cape and hood and pointed sandals. Excuse me, Dr. Frothingay, but we shall have to have another rector at New Richmond. I would advise you to leave this afternoon," and with that the Doctor hastened to Judge Gildersleeve's office.

All that afternoon "there was a hurrying to and fro in Dixie," as Hugh Grant humorously expressed it; and the trembling communication that passed from lip to lip was, "*We have been betrayed.*"

But if there was "a hurrying to and fro in Dixie," the movement among the Northern adherents might aptly be called a *flying* to and fro. And the word that passed from man to man, and from woman to woman, uttered by lips not attuned to the Odes of Horace and Anacreon but that

had grown rudely eloquent uttering the high pæans of liberty and humanity, was "*Treason.*"

To groups of men wherever assembled, in stores, in the postoffice, on the street, at the court house, Amsden Armentrout, with a fierce wrath worthy of his Scotch ancestry, and a courage no man ever dared question, told the whole story, grimly, relentlessly, with a consuming joy. It was not a pretty story. Treason is never a pleasing theme. Duplicity, once discovered, has no votaries; nor has the traitor ever had a single defender. The story of Benedict Arnold will never be set to music; the gigantic plottings of Cataline, though rich with dramatic suggestion, will never become an epic. And the brief story was: Jeff Davis' emissary and spy had been in New Richmond for months; had been welcomed, aided, and abetted by all the Rebel sympathizers in New Richmond, especially by the Culpeppers; while accepting the hospitality of good Union people, and breaking bread with them, had been constantly plotting their destruction; and having accomplished his damnable mission to the utmost of his ability, had gone, not to Paris, as alleged, but to Richmond to report to his master, and was now being lionized and banquetted by the arch-traitor, Jeff Davis, said emissary and spy being none other than *Felix Palfrey*.

The revulsion of feeling throughout the community, and change of sentiment, occasioned by this event, was thrillingly dramatic—but we must not anticipate.



## CHAPTER X

### A CLEVER SCHEME—THE YOUNG LAWYER INVITED TO THE ELMS

AT last Vergie was convalescent. For weeks her life had trembled in a balance, but, thanks to the best of care and a seemingly indestructible constitution, she had won the victory and was on the highway to recovery. True, she was very weak and pale, a pallor emphasized by her milk-white teeth and jet-black hair and eyes—but now she was able to sit up a part of each day; and though able to partake of only the lightest food, and of that sparingly, her sleep was normal, her nerves were restored to health, and her mind had become entirely rational. In a week, if the weather continued fine, she was to go driving with her father. Of the cause of her illness, or what had occurred at Judge Gildersleeve's, nothing had been said—nor had she been informed of current events. Dr. Boynton had ordered quiet and the avoidance of all unnecessary conversation, especially on subjects that might disquiet her; and she had made it easy to carry out his orders to the very letter by her unwonted meekness, docility, and abstinence from inquiry. The day of the Rector's return from his ill-starred visit to Richmond Mrs. Culpepper said to her husband—they were at their noonday dinner: "How is our little girlie, Fairfax? You're so close-mouthed I never can find out anything from you."

"Sound as a dollar, my dear, only weak. I'm vastly more concerned for your health."

"Oh, never mind me, Fairfax—but Vergie, my poor darling!" Tears came to her eyes.

"But, really, Father," said Harold, "you're keeping nothing back, are you? You doctors are so blamed secretive and mysterious you always give me the creeps. *Is* Vergie all right? *Will* she soon be up and about? And her mind——?"

"Harold, you scoundrel, what do you mean by such talk?" the Doctor exploded. "Vergie, I tell you, is as sound as a pine-knot; never before was in as good health as at the present moment, only weak of course; and as for her mind—I only wish you had half as much sense as your sister has. Now get out of here before I get up and give you a caning."

"Good old Pater!" laughed Harold, as he mockingly bowed himself out of the room and ascended to his sister's chamber to keep her company while she ate her frugal dinner of weak tea, buttered toast, asparagus tips, and a very small bit of broiled white fish.

"'Pon my word, Vergie, you're looking fine," he exclaimed, as he marked a slight glow of color in her face.

"Good as new, Harold, only frightfully weak," she responded, as she wearily turned her head so she could see out of the window.

Very early the following morning Dr. Culpepper drove away, taking Mrs. Culpepper with him—"for a bit of this fine October air," she had said.

Harold went to the post office but very shortly returned, going immediately to Vergie's room. To his surprise he found her up, dressed in a loose lounging robe, and sitting in an invalid-chair by the window. Evidently she was very much better.

"And how is your Ladyship this morning" making a courtly bow.

"Very, very much better and stronger, me Lud," she gaily

replied, "but you? I fear you're not so well—you look anything but fit. Trouble? Loss of sleep? How fares it with thee and the fair Marjorie?"

"See here, Vergie," breaking off abruptly, "I'm deucedly glad you're better; for it's time you and I were holding a council of war. Fact is, I'm about crazy," putting his arm about her and drawing her close to him.

"So bad as that? Has *la dolce Marjorieta* been abusing my big brother?"

"Not that, Vergie," now more seriously. "There *is* something wrong with Marjorie, though what it is I can't find out; but I'm not speaking of that."

"What is it, then? Why, Harold, you alarm me."

"Don't get excited, Sister, but hell's to pay."

"'Hell?' What would Dr. Frothingay say if he were to hear you use such a naughty word?"

"Damn Dr. Poppinjay—I mean, Frothingay!"

"Why, Harold, what *is* the matter?"

"Vergie," pausing and looking at her long and searchingly, as though appraising her condition, "can you bear to hear something that—well, isn't at all agreeable?"

"Why, certainly—you forget that I'm a Culpepper."

Harold made a wry face but continued, "And you'll not allow yourself to become the least bit excited?"

"Please, Harold, go on. Can't you trust me, your own sister? But I shall become nervous if you keep me in suspense much longer."

"All right, sister mine. Of course I trust you. You always were *game*, the gamest little girl in the world. Now lay back in that easy chair. Let me fix your head—a trifle lower—there."

"Harold, what *are* you going to do? Extract a *tooth*?" Her laughter was good to hear.

Satisfied that she was comfortable, and in a position that



would be restful, he told her the state of affairs, keeping nothing back: what Congress had done, the laws enacted respecting the war, the Battle of Bull Run, the call for a great army of three-year men and the prompt and enthusiastic response of the North, the unexpected firmness and sagacity of Lincoln, the increasing loyalty of the non-slaveholding states and the tide of wrath everywhere rising against Southern sympathizers, McClellan's wonderful work organizing and training a mighty army, and the general situation in the South.

At last he paused. "How are you standing it, Vergie? Wouldn't this better be 'continued in our next?'"

"Oh, no. Please go on. It's like a great drama. I'm not at all tired or nervous. And——?" Her head was tilted sidewise like a bird.

"Vergie, you're the greatest ever," again clasping her in his arms and kissing her.

"Oh! You horrid bear! And——?"

Briefly as possible he related the incidents of the Frothingay episode.

"Oh, the preachers," she exclaimed. "What a galaxy of angels and—*pack of fools*. Ready to die for you, to be worms, broken vessels, accursed of men, yet—*vain as peacocks*. Beautifully humble, boundlessly charitable, utterly self-forgetting in ninety-nine things but—touch their *vanity*, *creed*, or *church*, and they become *fiends*. Frothingay! Such a *dear* old man and—*simpleton!*"

"*Whew*, Vergie, something's wrong with your liver. But seriously, do you realize what this revelation of our complicity in this Palfrey affair means to—to *us*? Where we stand—*now*?"

"No, Harold, tell me."

"Vergie, darling, we're *disgraced*."

"In everybody's sight?" There was only the slightest

tremor in her voice. "How about the friends of—yesterday?"

"Ashamed of us or—*afraid*."

"So bad as that?"

"Worse, Vergie—but let's defer this matter awhile. I'm wearing you out."

"No, you're not. I must hear it all now. What could be worse than to be shunned and despised by one's supposed friends?"

"You forget our *enemies*."

"But have we *no* friends at all?"

"None that we can count on, or that could help us, though ever so willing. You see, Sister, we've overestimated our strength."

"But I thought almost everybody was on our side."

"Sentimentally, theoretically, philosophically, yes; practically, positively, aggressively, no. Not many these days are going to crucifixion for Church or State, for God or Country."

"And our 'friends' are—all turncoats?"

"No, Vergie, only prudent; and I don't blame them. *Cui bono*, dearie? Gildersleeve would lose his judgeship were he to put his *imprimatur* on us and our doctrines, Pinckney the headship of the schools, Gordon the post office. Oh, there'd be plenty doing all right, all right, and we wouldn't be helped in the least."

"Oh, the cruel, unfeeling North—I hate it!"

"No worse than the South, Vergie. I see where a whole Union family was wiped out the other day in East Tennessee. They were given one minute's grace. 'Shout for Jeff Davis or die!' They shouted for *Abe Lincoln* and—the census of the next world was increased by four. You see the poor unfortunates were so foolish as to be brave and remain in the *enemy's* country, just as—some other folks are doing up North."

"But, Harold—you know I'm not the least mite afraid—are we really in danger?"

"Why not, aren't *we* in the enemy's country?"

"Imminent?"

"Not you, Sweetheart, or Mother."

"But you and Papa?"

"Father?—yes. Mother's gone with Father now to see his patients. She was afraid he'd be killed if he went alone. You see a mob started here last night to kill Father. Might have succeeded if they hadn't been stopped."

"Stopped? Who stopped them? Who was brave enough to—to?"

"Amsden Armentrout."

"The old traitor. How I wish Uncle Jeff could get hold of him!"

"Dearie, Uncle Jeff wouldn't hurt him. Uncle Jeff thinks Armentrout and the like are all right—up North."

"Why—how's that?" She was becoming confused.

"Oh, what's *treason* up North is *patriotism* down South, and *vice versa*. It all depends on the locality you're in. They'd make short shrift of old Amsden if he were down South and talked and carried on the way he does here, just as——"

"Oh, Harold——". She had just caught the meaning. The logic of the situation—*rationale*—for the first time was dawning on her. Her angle of vision was shifting—she was beginning to see the position of her father and brother from the Abolition view point. She now recalled that her Uncle Jeff had declared he had no thought of invading the North, that he would repel only invasion; that the North had a perfect right to its institutions and way of thinking, just as the South had a perfect right to its institutions and way of thinking. As one emerging from a long and troubled dream she slowly came to realize that, even according to



her Uncle Jeff's political philosophy, Armentrout, in his way, was a Patriot. She adored Bobby Toombs, and Armentrout was a sort of Northern Bobby Toombs. Hate the Abolitionists as she would—as the Cavalier must ever despise the Roundhead—she must nevertheless acknowledge the justness of their attitude toward Southern sympathizers who lived and labored in the North. But *murder*—By one of those strange shiftings of the mental kaleidoscope, which everyone has experienced but no one can explain, she suddenly saw the white faces of her father and brother—*dead!*

"Oh! Is there nothing I can do?" She had forgotten her brother's presence, her outcry being occasioned by her mental vision.

"Yes, Sister, you're our only hope."

"Is it so desperate as that? What can I do? I'm helpless."

"Through Simonson, Vergie."

"Simonson? I don't remember him." She was absorbed for a moment, then a wave of crimson swept over her.

"Yes, Harold, I remember him," very gently. "How through Simonson?" Harold had expected a different response.

"It's this way, Sister. Though Simonson's a cracker, and a Missouri cracker at that, he's every inch a man, and a gentleman, too. It goes against the grain to confess it, but it's the God's truth. I know I acted the cad the first time I met him down at Marjorie's, made of myself a 24-karat donkey—but, well, you know how we were brought up.

"Then he's scholarly—no, don't stop me. This all bears on what I've got to say. The Judge declares that Simonson's *forgotten* more law, history, philosophy, and general literature than any other ten New Richmond lawyers ever *knew*—though I don't think the chap's ever forgotten anything. Greek and Latin? Why, if our Quoth Horace and

Simonson could hit it off socially and politically what a time they'd have spouting classical tommyrot. Europe? Oh, yes, he's up on Europe. Saw all of it. Was there a whole year? Yes, I know he was peddling handbills, or carrying water to the elephant, or acting as chambermaid to the Holy Ichthyosaurus, or Sacred Dinotherium—anyway a blasted plebeian—nevertheless, Vergie, *he got there*.

"Then he has *gumption*, a thing of which I fear we Culpeppers are sadly deficient. He's brave without getting hot—never loses his temper, or gets rattled. Fight? Well, I reckon—but he'll never have to. Look at those legs of his, those arms and hands, that torso, those shoulders, that head—nobody'll ever want to tackle that aggregation of six feet two of brain, brawn, and red blood. Why, Vergie, he could take you up in his arms and crush you in an instant."

Vergie breathed short, spasmodically, and the color deepened in her face and eyes.

"Yes, Simonson has a way of getting along with people—somehow folks take to him, and like him, and believe in him. Doesn't seem to try to please anybody, blamed independent sort of a rooster; yet everybody swears by him. Whatever he says *goes*, and yet he blew in here only eight months ago.

"Another strange thing—he seems to be acquainted with Lincoln, and to have some sort of a *pull*. Just leaked out. Don't know that I've got it straight. Seems that some Boston people wrote to Lincoln about Simonson, and Lincoln invited him to *visit* him at Springfield—what do you think of *that*? Not much like old Frothingay—never cheeped! Lincoln told somebody and in that way the word's got back here. Anyway Lincoln's passed the word down along the line that what Simonson says goes in this community—see? Gordon of course has to keep *mum*—'fraid he'll lose the post office—but that Miss Tittle-Tattle Gobble-Gabble that stands at the general delivery window 'chawin'

gum and representing the Goddess of Liberty has told, oh, so confidentially, that that upstart young lawyer gets letters right along from Abe Lincoln—and that one came only yesterday.”

“A very good sermon, reverend sir, very good!” said the beautiful girl. “But what’s the ‘finally and in conclusion, brethren,’ the—er—point?”

*“You must make Simonson fall in love with you, because he’s the only man that can save us.”*

Vergie sat motionless as a statue. No sound escaped her lips. She seemed to be staring with unseeing eyes. For aught of sound or motion one would have declared her dead. At mention of “love” she had suddenly straightened up in the invalid-chair, remaining statuesque as a soldier standing “attention.” At last Harold was alarmed. The proposal could not be other than shocking, or revolting, or both—and she was only convalescent. He therefore spoke in a low tone—

“Vergie.”

“Yes?”

“Do you hate Simonson?”

“No, not—*now*.”

“Then you will——?”

“You ask me to betray a good man, to wreck his life, to——”

“Oh, not so bad as that, Vergie. Don’t look at me so! I put it strongly to arrest your attention; to bring home your truant thoughts; to focus your mind. You needn’t go so far as that—win his special regard; weave about him the charm, the lure, of you personality; make it a delight for him to come to The Elms; in other words, provide for us a powerful friend at Court.”

“Harold, brother dear, you ask of me the impossible.”



"Pardon me, Vergie; is it because you are still in love with Palfrey?"

"No."

"But you did love him?"

"Maybe so—I don't know."

"When did the—the feeling cease?"

"At Judge Gildersleeve's that—that terrible night." It was the first time she had referred to what those present had come to call, "The Fourth-of-July-night Tragedy."

"Why?" The question was purposely ambiguous.

"He—he—Palfrey wasn't sufficient—Harold; don't ask me, dear. There are some questions a girl can't answer."

She stirred slightly. There was a momentary twitching of her fingers; and the glow in her eyes was suddenly intensified.

Presently, "Then when the climax came, and Palfrey laughingly exulted in the success of his deception of everybody, except a few of us; proud of his hoodwinking and successful double-dealing, entirely apart from the end in view, as a master-pianist is of his virtuosity, my indifference changed to loathing. The man that wins and holds my love must be *straightforward*. Then there was not enough of him; he was not sufficiently . . . *vital*. Before he left I told him never to return; and not to write to me."

"But there are at least a dozen letters downstairs from him—they're all addressed to you. They've not been opened."

"Then don't open them. Throw them in the fire."

"But some of them are bulky. I'm sure they contain presents. Some of them may be valuable."

"No matter. I don't desire them. Please throw them in the fire."

"And Simonson——?"

"No use to mention him, Harold. You know he hates me."

He ought to hate me. In fact I honor him for hating me. It's the only 'redress' a gentleman has when a woman forgets decency, and forfeits the title of 'lady'—as I did. Were I a man he could challenge me to mortal combat and, very properly, kill me; being, unfortunately, a woman, he can slay me, as far as possible, only with the tense gleam of the basilisk's eye—the eye of hatred."

"But, Vergie——"

"Please, let's drop the matter."

"But listen a moment."

"Very well, Sir Irrepressible, proceed," leaning back once more in her invalid-chair with a mock-heroic air of resignation. "Patience on a pedestal joyfully waits your further phantasmagoric ah—er, vagaries."

Harold laughed. It did him good to hear his sister jest once more. It was indicative of the return of her former health and vivacity.

"You say that the young lawyer hates you?"

"Yes."

"And that you have sinned against him most grievously?"

"Yes, holy father; but I warn you now that this is only one of the many sins which I from time to time most grievously have committed," at the same time hurling a daintily woven lavender slipper at his head. She was actually laughing.

"Very well, daughter," wittily adopting her form of speech. "Your perversity deeply grieves me; but your ardent and unaffected penitence fills me with hope. And this is the penance you must do; and this the consolation I am able to offer.

"By your transgression, your cruel and malignant act"—Vergie winced, but Harold went on unheeding, apparently not observing—"you have won the privilege of despatching by the hand of your devout and ever-faithful brother, whom

may all the saints ever bless, a daintily written note to the party against whom you have so flagitiously acted, beseeching him to grant you an interview; and since you are on a bed of affliction, entreating him to vouchsafe to you the grace of a personal call at his earliest convenience—but for this opprobrious act of your's, most justly causing him to regard you as his enemy, this frowardness on your part would be highly improper, and wholly unpermissible. *Then*—and this is your consolation—by those wiles of your sex, wiles of which you are mistress, fairest of all the Daughters of Eve; and the exquisite winsomeness of your person, which no man has ever been, or ever will be able to resist; enhanced by all those witcheries and alluring mysteries of dress and coiffure and perfume which ever make you *the* cynosure of all eyes in whatever throng you may favor with your presence; charms and fascinations rendered yet more potent and appealing by the air and mien—m-i-e-n, please—of the utterly-crushed and heart-broken penitent—all in a low and tearful voice, pitched midway between despair and the tiniest bit of hope; with soft incidental music, carefully provided in advance, in the distance; you shall win the desire of your heart, namely, your brother's immunity from dire peril, and, mayhap, your venerable and dearly-beloved sire from sudden and cruel death. Arise, daughter, and go in peace."

Late in the afternoon Harold Culpepper called at the office of Judge Gildersleeve, which was also the office of Samuel Simonson.

"I thank you for your call, Mr. Culpepper," the young lawyer began at once. "I was just debating which I would better do, call in person at The Elms, or write."

"I shall be sorry, Mr. Simonson, if my call should deprive us of the pleasure of seeing you at The Elms." Harold's voice and manner plainly indicated that he was in earnest.



It could not be said their relations were in any way chummy or confidential. However, since the event at The Maples, the night of the Fourth, there had been some measure of cordiality. Previous to that time Marjorie's shadow had always hovered between them; but after that night Marjorie had taken herself out of the young lawyer's life. Why she had done so none, save herself, could have told, and this she had not seen fit to do. For several days she had remained in strict seclusion, except when driving with her father. It was given out that she was ill, a statement verified by her extreme pallor and a look of profound melancholy. This was easily accounted for by the shock occasioned by Vergie's outbreak, followed by Vergie's long illness. It was also observed that Harold was greatly depressed. Some thought that Vergie's conduct had caused a dissolution of their troth; others that his dejection was occasioned solely by Marjorie's illness. All uncertainty, however, came to an end with the announcement of their engagement, date of wedding not given, after which Marjorie had gone for a long visit with an aunt in Cincinnati. Of a certain event at the door of The Maples, and repeated at the gate, none, save the two interested parties, knew.

The real facts in the case were these: The young lady in question and a certain young lawyer were horrified by what had "happened," and—*glad* of it. It was terrible to remember, yet—they would *cherish* the memory of it forever. They wouldn't have done it for anything in the world, nor—would they have *missed* doing it for anything in the world. They were at once unspeakably *miserable* and *unutterably happy*.

But with one accord they had come to the same conclusion: "It" could never be; and the sooner they lived it down, though they could never forget, the better it would be for both. With this resolution firmly made, each making

it without the other's knowledge, Marjorie, the certain young lady before mentioned, resolutely set about living up to her engagement vows to Harold Culpepper; and the young lawyer, with equal sternness of purpose, turned with increased devotion to his great profession. Under these conditions it can easily be seen how the way was opened for Mr. Samuel Simonson and Mr. Harold Culpepper to become cordial, and finally intimate, friends.

"You are very kind, Mr. Culpepper, and I thank you for your courtesy. As you know," the young lawyer continuing, "I'm something of a stranger in New Richmond, and thus far have succeeded in keeping clear of the several parties and factions that are more or less antagonistic to one another."

"You have been exceedingly discreet, Mr. Simonson, and I congratulate you on your extraordinary success. Not one man in ten thousand could have done what you have done: without fear or favor maintained your integrity, and at the same time equally retained the esteem and confidence of all citizens, even the most bitter and belligerent. You must know, Mr. Simonson, how we have failed; for though we've been thoroughly honest and well-meaning in all that we've said and done, I understand many of our neighbors are almost, if not quite, thirsting for our blood."

Harold laughed, though not without a note of anxiety in his voice. The young lawyer looked up and smiled, but there was no glint of humor in his face.

"It was regarding that matter I was coming to see you, or—write."

Harold now was very sober. He was not a coward, yet he shrank from a hostile demonstration. "Do you think there's real danger, Mr. Simonson?"

"Not immediately, though Judge Gildersleeve fears trouble—*tonight*."

"My God, not tonight, Simonson! With my mother sick,

and Vergie just convalescing? No, it cannot be. Have the Abolitionists become so insanely furious and bloodthirsty, and so forgetful of all chivalrous amenities, as to make war on sick and helpless women?"

"Do not distress yourself, Mr. Culpepper. As I said before, I think you need not anticipate trouble tonight; but unless you are very discreet I fear there'll be trouble, perhaps serious trouble, in the near future. But for Mr. Armentrout, who's a stranger to fear, there would have been a—a serious infraction of the law last night."

"But there isn't trouble brewing for us tonight, is there? Speak out plainly, man. As your Mr. Phillips says, 'Don't shilly-shally.'"

There was just a perceptible warning flash in the young lawyer's eyes as he quietly replied, "Excuse me, Mr. Culpepper. Though Mr. Phillips is a most excellent and accomplished gentleman he is not *my* man, nor am I *his*. As for shilly-shallying, I was never accused of that before. However, I've had my say. That's all."

"A thousand pardons, Mr. Simonson. Believe me, I meant no offense. We Southerners are, I fear, somewhat dictatorial and overbearing, especially when we're excited. I'm deeply concerned for my precious mother and sister, and my anxiety led me to speak with unseemly haste."

"It's all right, Mr. Culpepper—no offense is taken. I had said, however, all I had to say. Indeed I should beg your pardon for what I have said since it is no affair of mine; but, as a matter of fair play, I didn't want you to be taken unaware. It's but proper that I should also add, in this connection, that I was prompted to communicate with you mainly out of my regard for the ladies at The Elms—for I well know that you and your father are easily able to **take** care of yourselves." The lawyer now was smiling, a smile most people found hard to resist.



Rising to leave Harold took from his pocket a note and laid it before the young lawyer, simply saying, "This is from my sister, Vergie. If I am not mistaken she desires me to be the bearer of your answer."

The chirography was dainty, but very distinct.

"Samuel Simonson, Esquire:—I very much desire to see you soon, if possible this evening. I have no claim on your time or consideration, quite the reverse; and but for my weakness, incident to my long and severe illness, I would crave the boon of an interview at your office. May I hope for a kindly answer? A verbal reply will be sufficient.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA LEE CULPEPPER."

Having read it through the second time the young lawyer quietly said, "This note, as you have said, is from your sister. I think I understand her generous motive in writing to me. It is an invitation to call on her this evening at The Elms. Would you not better bear to her my assurances of highest esteem, and a date for my call some weeks later, or days at least, when she will have completely recovered her health?"

"Really, Mr. Simonson, if you can come this evening I wish you would—that is, if you're not averse to accepting the invitation. I chance to know that she worries greatly concerning a certain matter, and I'm sure that if you could grant her the favor she asks it would not only afford her great pleasure, but, by putting her mind and heart at rest, hasten her recovery."

"I thank you for your generous words. Please, therefore, present my compliments to Miss Culpepper, and say to her that I shall do myself the honor of calling on her at eight-thirty this evening."

## CHAPTER XI

QUOTH POLLY, "I WANT A CRACKER"; QUOTH VERGIE, "SO DO I"

WHATEVER Vergie desired she desired greatly, and whatever she attempted she usually accomplished. Mentally, morally and physically she was virile; and with all the imperiousness of her nature she, too young yet to philosophize or psychologize, craved, yearned for, demanded in the man of her choice an equal endowment of virility; and this was the one and only respect in which Felix Palfrey had been lacking.

Happily, her moral nature was equally disciplined and regnant. Southern girls are more carefully instructed regarding the great sanctities of life than their Northern sisters, and are more constantly and solemnly exhorted and required to maintain the highest ideal of vestal purity, such as the young husband has the right to expect and demand of the bride. To embrace the unbetrothed, even though the offender be an accepted suitor, is, in the South, a grave offense, akin to the crime that is punishable by death, at the hand of the nearest relative; and it is the proud boast of many Southern wives and husbands that they knew naught of twining arms and clinging kisses till God himself had hallowed their union at the marriage altar. In Memphis a Northerner, sitting in a parlor, said to a young lady, "Ah, what a shapely foot you have!" The young lady broke out crying, and her brother sped a bullet through the offender's heart.

Thus Vergie's moral quality and training were of the highest type. Not that she was ignorant of the devious ways of sin. Ignorance may or may not be the mother of devotion, but ignorance is never an element of strength. With her mother she had read French novels in the original, and loathed their putridity. With her father she had read the Latin Classics, and been amazed at their vulgarity. Even Horace, of whom her father was very fond, incensed her by his thinly-veiled libidity. Sometimes she even took her father to task as, for example, when he praised Horace's Ode to Thaliarchus.

"But think, Daughter," her father, vexed, replied, "how nobly it opens: \**Vides ut Soracte stet candidum alta nive, laborantes silvæ nec jam sustineant onus, flumina constiterint acuto geluque. Dissolve frigus, large reponens ligna super foco, atque benignius deprome, O Thaliarche, quadrimum merum Sabina diota.*'"

"Yes, Papa," was her instant rejoinder, "but think also how ignobly he closes: °*Nunc et lenes que susurri sub noctem, repetantur composita hora, nunc et gratus risus ab intimo angulo, proditor latentis puellæ, pignusque dereptum lacertis, aut digito, male pertinaci.*' Ugh! I can't endure him."

Nevertheless, she was afraid of Samuel Simonson. She was sorry she had allowed Harold to coax her into inviting him to The Elms. She recalled the night of the tragic Fourth at Judge Gildersleeve's. She then had hated him

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\* Seest thou how Soracte stands white with the deep snow, and how the struggling woods cannot now support the weight, and the rivers are congealed by the penetrating frost. Dispel the cold by freely piling the logs upon the hearth, and more liberally bring out, O Thaliarchus, the four-year-old wine from the Sabine jar.

° Now let soft whispers at the approach of night be repeated at the appointed hour, and now also the pleasant laugh from some secret corner, the *betray*er of the lurking maiden, and the forfeit snatched from her arms, or from her fingers, affectedly resisting.



on Felix Palfrey's account. Strangely enough the flame of her hatred had consumed, not Simonson, but *Palfrey*. Her hatred of Simonson, sudden and uncontrollable, had been inspired by envy: he had something—a fullness and completeness of physical energy and masterfulness—Palfrey did not possess. She was wrought to sudden fury by the thought that, in accepting Palfrey, she was being *robbed*. She wanted—not Simonson; as he was a “cracker” she had never thought of him as a possible husband, but—in Palfrey *Simonson's* girth, and height, and breadth, and forcefulness, and virility. And because that was impossible she had hated—*Palfrey*.

But since that awful night many things had transpired. She was done with Palfrey and he was gone—for that she was devoutly thankful. Her long illness, too, had afforded time and opportunity for calm reflection; to reckon anew her moral and spiritual latitude and longitude; to appraise, with wider and deeper knowledge and experience, earthly and heavenly verities and values; and to more accurately determine and plan her future conduct and destiny.

Moreover, political events had varied, in some cases reversed, the old order. A “cracker” now was President and was astonishing the world with his gentleness, sagacity, courage, and noble manhood. On every hand “crackers” were rushing to the fore—was the world coming to an end? During her excruciating pain she had prayed much—but to Whom? Jesus, a plebeian mechanic. With a gasp as these thoughts had come booming into her consciousness, like the midnight tide of the ocean, she had said to herself: “Who am I? Where do I belong? With the aristocracy of the world? It seems not. Jesus the true Aristocrat, not Tiberius Cæsar. Saul of Tarsus, the man among men, not Nero. Carpenter and tentmaker, “crackers,” yet at the very apex of the world's nobility.”

Samuel Simonson—ah, yes! Did she hate him now? No—but she feared him. Those strong legs; those long, sinewy arms; those shapely, gripping hands; those herculean shoulders; that deep expanding breast; that heart she instinctively felt must sometimes beat furiously in its prison; that firm mouth and jaw; those keen, steady, piercing blue-gray eyes; that leonine head—she was afraid of him. What might he not sometime do to her or with her, were he so a-mind? She recalled Harold's remark: "Why, Vergie, Simonson could take you in his arms and crush you in an instant," and a low tense flame glowed in her eyes and tinged her cheeks.

Yes, he was a "cracker," but also he was a *gentleman*. How Harold, her own brother, had praised the young lawyer! Yet Harold at first had hated him. Was she to have a like experience?—to pass from hatred to——?

"Vergie!" She was startled out of her reverie. It was Harold calling from the foot of the stairs.

"Yes, Harold?"

"That terrible ogre's coming."

"Yes?"

"Shall I bring him to your room?"

"I—I—don't know, Harold."

"You sent for him. Hurry, Vergie!"

"Yes, Harold—bring him up."

"And, Vergie, do you know the latest popular song?"

"No, Harold, you never told me—but you won't have time to tell me now. He must be almost to the door." She was anxiously patting down the folds of her gown.

"Yes, I have, sister dear. Think you can remember it? Now, don't forget. Here it is:

"'Sam Simonson was Abe Simonson's son,  
And he was a drunkard, too.'"

"Oh!" The reminder, though but an outlandish jest such as brothers delight in, was to Vergie like an iced-water plunge, followed by a sudden dip in boiling vitriol. The hypnotic spell she had woven about herself, romantic and sentimental, now was gone. Something of the old hatred returned, the feeling she had on the night of the Fourth. For a moment she was blind and nauseous. No! She *wouldn't* see him! Why should she demean herself by sitting *tête-à-tête* with the plebeian son of old Abe Simonson, the drunkard? She wouldn't! She——

There was a light tap at the door, very gentle. "It must be Mother," she thought.

"Come."

Noiselessly the door was opened, as a mother, fearing she might disturb a sick or slumbering child, would have opened it, and the young lawyer entered.

"Oh, it's *you*, is it?" Taken so completely by surprise, she had forgotten, for the moment, to greet and welcome him as she otherwise would have done, even though he had been an utter stranger.

"Yes, Miss Culpepper, it is I. Your brother protested that his sister was so 'fierce' he was afraid to venture upstairs, and dared me come up and face the 'lioness in her den.'" His voice was deep and musical, and his face was anything but stern, as she had expected it to be. In fact, it was half smiling, and there was a roguish gleam in his eyes.

She arose with a natural but exquisite grace and gave him her hand. "You are a brave man to venture so much, especially after being so solemnly warned by such an intrepid hero as my brother." She was smiling.

"Oh, you mean, I suppose, that my valor is greater than my discretion. What is the old saying? 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' So? Then let me quote



another and apply it to myself: 'The fool is *happy* that he knows no more'; and another: 'To wisdom he's a fool that will not *yield*.' "

She looked at him sharply. Were there hidden meanings in his quotations—interlineations she could not read?

"Forgive me, Miss Culpepper. I forgot that you have been ill, and now are only convalescent. I should not have permitted you to rise," arranging her chair for her with gentle solicitude.

"You have not resided in New Richmond very long, Mr. Simonson?" interrogatively.

"That depends on how you reckon time. Bailey, you know, says, 'We should count time by heart-throbs.' If that be true, I have lived in New Richmond a long while."

Vergie somehow felt uncomfortable. She vaguely resented the aptness and promptness of his replies. If he were exactly a proper person it would be different, but——

"Yes," he was continuing, "I sometimes dispute the testimony of my very staid and orthodox watch—even of my *spinal column*. For instance, I have listened to sermons that I would have sworn, on the authority of my spinal column, were anywhere from a century to an eternity long, when my watch would boldly, and with no little impudence, declare that, from text to peroration, only twenty minutes had elapsed. Another time, listening to Dr. Lyman Beecher, I was vexed because he stopped so soon; but again my watch reproved me by holding up both hands and proclaiming that he had preached more than two hours."

"Of course he preached on the evils of slavery, and mercilessly denounced the South."

"You are mistaken, Miss Culpepper. His text was, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.' "

Vergie was becoming angry. "Is he trying to get even? Does he mean to insult me?" Then, aloud:

"I suppose, Mr. Simonson, you are very fond of Boston." She was not getting on well and was at a loss for a subject of mutual interest.

"Yes, I both like and dislike Boston. Its old buildings, rich with historic associations; its libraries and galleries of art; its lyric and dramatic stage; its great symphony and oratorio concerts—all these things appeal to me greatly. On the other hand——" He paused, examining some late roses in a vase on the table.

"Yes? 'On the other hand'——?" repeated Vergie.

"Boston is insular and pedantic, and that I do not like. Boston thinks it's the Hub of the Universe, and wants to dictate to the whole world. Boston, too, has the spirit of persecution; and sometimes exhibits a marvelous combination of culture and cruelty, aspiration and asininity."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Simonson," enthusiastically.

"For instance," continued the young lawyer, "think how they mobbed Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips, two of the noblest men that ever lived; and Boston boasted that the rioters wore broadcloth, and were dressed *de rigueur*. What do you think of that?"

"Served them—ah, most indecorously, I should say."

Again she was angry and tempted to be flippant. She had thought of saying, "Served them right," or of innocently asking, "And were the gentlemen who were mobbed also dressed *de rigueur*? If not, the mob should have been ashamed of itself. Gentlemen should never participate in a function of that sort without conventional attire, and medals pinned on their breasts, especially those taking the leading parts and enjoying the largest publicity, such as the Messrs. Phillips and Garrison."

"No," said the young lawyer, "I do not like Boston's per-

secuting spirit. Of all men, I think the cool, deliberate, predetermined persecutor is the most despicable, whether in broadcloth, or in jeans and corduroy, and whether his weapon be a bludgeon or a pen aided by the flying Mercury of the printing press; whether it be after Saul's manner, or the stealthy way of a—a *Cataline*."

"Then I'm sure you daily meet many in New Richmond who greatly excite your ire."

"To whom do you refer, Miss Culpepper? Monsieur Felix Palfrey, zee leetl' moo-zik and lang-widge teach-*aire*?"

The young lawyer's drawl and grimace were infinitely mirth-provoking, but Vergie was furious. She could scarcely contain herself. Felix Palfrey—how she hated him! But why should this Missouri cracker taunt her with him? Did he think that she and Palfrey were lovers—perhaps soon to marry? Palfrey? Of course the young lawyer knew Palfrey had often been an honored guest at The Elms—did he know the whole nauseating story? Palfrey—Cataline! The Elms the refuge of Cataline Palfrey! Cataline Palfrey the accepted suitor of the Lady of The Elms, as she was often called! Cataline Palfrey—and this Hercules, in from driving the herds of Geryon, dares taunt me by smilingly bringing up the name of this zee-ing, and ah-ing, and moo-zik-ing pocket edition of a man! She couldn't stand it—she wouldn't! Regardless of consequences, she would order him from the house. She would—

"Mr. Simonson! Mr. Simonson! Will you excuse yourself a moment, please, and come down?" It was the voice of Dr. Culpepper, and it rang with anxiety.

"Certainly, Doctor! I'll be right down." Then turning to Vergie, who at the first sound of her father's voice had leaped to her feet, he said, "Excuse me, Miss Culpepper.



More than likely they will need me—that is, want to make some inquiries of——”

“Do you think something’s going to happen? Will there be danger? I—I——” In her anxiety, her wrath now all forgotten, she was standing very close to the tall, rugged, sinewy young lawyer, thrilled by his presence.

“How much do you know?” His voice now was strong, though subdued and harsh. Instinctively she quailed before him. She was not accustomed to being addressed curtly, but now she was not displeased. He was a tower of strength and determination, unfearing, unflinching, unyielding, and her heart went out in gratitude to him.

“I know everything, Mr. Simonson.”

“Great God! Everything? You don’t mean it.” He had seized her by the arm, roughly, brutally, anything but gallantly, but she—*enjoyed it*. He was masterful, to be trusted, relied on.

“Yes, Mr. Simonson, everything: the mob last night, the threat to burn down The Elms, to kill Father, to——”

There came the sound of a gun from over town, and a distant yell.

“Girl!” he almost hissed. Now he was bending over her, looking into her face. She felt at first she couldn’t endure his eyes, they were so direct and searching.

“Girl, are you a genuine Culpepper, a true daughter of your father?”

“I—I think I am.”

Again he peered into her face. She could feel his breath on her cheeks.

“Let me see your hand! It doesn’t tremble, I see. You’re all right.” There was such a bluntness and finality in his speech she couldn’t refrain from smiling. She thought of the dainty and esthetic Felix Palfrey and smiled again, but this smile had a frosty edge.

"Now be seated and stay here. Don't get excited; and keep away from the windows. It might not be—*healthy* there; the night air wouldn't be good for you. And don't be afraid. I suppose hell is brewing over in town. The deviltry of that Palfrey you folks have been mixed up with has made the people—some of them—crazy. Never liked the little *runt* myself, though I did think he was mighty *cute*. It's true I don't belong to your class, but I'll see that no harm comes to *you*. If the mob does get in I'll stand at the head of the stairs here and do the Horatius act; and if they keep coming, why—there'll be nobody left but us two to attend the funerals."

Vergie, strangely submissive, had seated herself, and looking up, saw, to her surprise, that he was laughing. Suddenly she felt a great heart-surge toward the strong, resolute, masterful man, and hurrying to the door through which he had just passed, called:

"Mr. Simonson, you'll come back—after a bit—won't you—please?"

"Maybe!" He was gone.

Dr. Culpepper advanced, extending his hand, and said: "Mr. Simonson, I thank you for the honor of this call, an honor to yourself, sir, many times multiplied by a certain unhappy episode which every member of my family deeply deplores, and by none quite as much as my daughter."

"I thank you, sir; but I think I'd better be going," said the young lawyer. "Between bad whiskey and misdirected patriotism, a large section of hades seems to be turned loose over in town." The young lawyer was moving toward the door.

"You're quite right, Sammy." It was Judge Gildersleeve, whom the young lawyer had not observed. "The Doctor thinks there's no danger, but I know better. Then there's Mrs. Culpepper and Vergie to be considered. But if any-

body knows the situation, it's old Armentrout. He's been skirmishing around for you for more than an hour. I met him a minute ago and told him I could find you; and he said, 'Find him, the ornery whelp, and get him here double-quick; there's hell to pay instanter.' "

The young lawyer was out and gone, making all possible speed toward the public square, now flying down the gravel-walk, now cutting across lots and scaling rail and picket fences—and somehow, as he ran, Vergie's face was constantly before him, now scornful, now defiant, now winsomely submissive and pleading, and now alluring with that beauty that sometimes maddens men and makes them forget God. And though rushing on to meet he knew not what—possibly death—he felt a strange thrill, electrical, exhilarating, something like that produced by a mingling of laudanum and champagne—that exquisite madness which induces laughter of soul, then rayless despair; a delirium wrought by the presence and touch of an uncommonly beautiful woman, a-tingle to her finger-tips with yet more uncommon physical strength, all compressed in a marvelously lithe and graceful body, and sex-vitality. And the effect on the young lawyer was so searching, penetrating, tumultous, because he himself was abnormally vital. It was billow echoing billow, and deep answering mighty deep.

When the young lawyer reached the public square, old Amsden had secured the attention of the mob that had scared out the town marshal, and now was bent on "smokin' out that damned old Rebel and the whole caboodle."

"Men," Amsden was shouting, "yuh dinna lak auld Doc Culpaipuh, 'n' Fleecem un Skinem Gol'beck, 'n' Prof. Pinck, 'n' th' res' o' 'em, un naither dae Ah; bu' heah meh!"

"Tuh hell wuth 'em!" roared the crowd.

"Heah meh uh meenit, please."

"G'on," shouted Bat Perkins, "bud hurry! Gut t' ged



aip airly 'n thuh mawnin' tuh 'taird thuh foon'rul." The crowd laughed.

"Nuvuh wes uh finuh sait o' men en thae warl', 'side frae pol'tics," old Amsden was saying. "Luik 't Prof Pink! Warks lak thae deil t' git uh li'l sainse intae yir young'uns' heids. Gie 'im hef uh chanct 'i' he'll mak' foine main 'n' wummen oot o' 'em, evun ef thair daddys air uh passul o' scrubs!"

Again the mob laughed.

"Then thah's auld Monuh-baigs Gol'beck. Skun uh flea fuh 'ts hoid un talluh; closuh'n th' ba'k un uh tree! Bu' hae 'e no he'pt ye oot o' mony uh toight place—Jeem, Beel, Aipsy, Bud Hawkins?"

"Naivuh uh durn cent," replied Hawkins.

"Hoo aboot las' wintuh uh ya'h syne, w'en th' shur'f wes uh gaen t' sull ye oot, lock, stock 'n' bah'l, fuh thet auld sew'n 'chine thut ye di'n need, 'n' ort t' ben kicked a' ower toon fuh buyin'?"

"Yuh're roight, old Amsy! Fuhgut! Muh 'stake un yo' treat."

"'N' thah's auld Gilduhsleeve. Fines' jedge 'at evuh sot un th' shucks, uh gunnuh-saick, uh w'utaivuh et iz!"

"Hai's uh raibul," shouted Phil Froley. "Doan' lak 'im, 'sides."

"In coose ye dinna—ken w'y? Kaze 'e sint y' t' th' pen aines fuh uh y'ah fuh hoss stealin'. Ortuh ben tain."

"Sock 't tuh 'um, ol' Ams!" the mob yelled. Evidently Phil was not a social favorite.

"Noo wi' coom tae auld Doc Culpaipuh." Amsden paused a moment, his voice being drowned by a torrent of shrieks and hisses, "Hang 'im! Hang 'im!"

"A' richt. Hang 'im! Druv' 'im oot! Git reed o' 'mi onywa' yuh can. Bu' hoo kin wuh git 'lang wi'oot 'im? Is he no honus? Is he no 'bleegin'? Is he no kin' tae th'

puir? Dis 'e evuh 'fuse tae doctuh fouk kaze thuh're unco puir, un canna gie 'im muckle siller? Nuvuh! Nuvuh sued uh man en 'iz life. Bet hef o' yir 'n daibt tae 'im noo!"

Still some were shouting, "Hang 'im! Hang 'im!"

"Yus; Ah heah ye, Jeem Hehny. Bu' wha doctuh'd yuh thrae thut lang spaill o' typhoid fevuh sax y'ah syne, 'n' saved yir ornery loife gin a' th' docs frae a' ower cr'ation 'ad gien y' oop tae dee? Ah'll tull ye. Auld Doc Culpaipuh. Paid 'im yit? Bet ye hae no.

"'N' thah's yo' yawpin', Pete Snyder. Bu' wha roid tain mile' thrae th' mood 'at nicht, w'en 't wes rainin' pitch-fohks, 'n' wes dahkuh'n uh steck uh black cats, un saved yo' li'l Janey's loife w'en sh' wuz chokun t' daith wi' mem-bree-nus croop? Huh? Ainsuh meh! Yussuree. Auld Doc Culpaipuh.

"Truth is, thar iz nae uh dang' ane o' ye bu's unduh ob'gations tae auld Doc Culpaipuh; un Ah 'tind tae stan' by 'im till hell freezes ower. Heah meh!"

"Ams, yo uh raibul, too."

"Ye're uh damn' liah, Bob Beech, yuh ornery li'l snipe. Winna fout ye; bu' ef Ah wes claise eneuch Ah'd spat un yuh 'n' *drown* yuh. Doot Ah cudna wallop ye, huh? Tul yuh Ah cud whup meh weight 'n wil'cats tae-nicht. Bu' Ah wadna durty meh han's wi' ye. Oh, shucks! uz Jedge Gilduhsleeve saiys."

"Ur yo' nud uh raibul, ol' Ams, what'n th' hell air yuh 'roun' hyar splav'catin' fuh raibuls fuh? Tell whah yo' stan', un'way."

"A' richt. 'Ah'm no feared, un Ah'm nae mealy-mooth'd. Nuvuh wuz. Ah'm fuh Abe Lincoln, 'n' th' nigguhs, un th' hale Unyun, un fuh hengin' ilka raibul 'n' th' 'Nitud States, frae Jaiff Davus doon, 'cept; *'cept*, mahk yuh, *oor ain fouk*. Thah's gaen tae be nae hengin' o' raibuls 'n' Raleigh County, wi'oot ma hailp—'n' Ah'll hailp t'ither wy!"

And thus the battle continued till the blacksmith had bully-ragged, and badgered, and joked the mob into a good humor; and, as Bob Beech said, "Thuh hangin' wuz pos'-pone' tull airly candul-loight, some tudduh toime. Bud wah'll git 'um yit—spashully ol' Doc Culpaipuh."

It was now almost midnight, and the young lawyer doubted the propriety of returning to The Elms; but he had promised—besides, now he felt a strange fascination, from which he shrank, yet could not wholly resist.

When he came in sight of the house, all, save for the hall light and a light in one of the upper chambers, was dark. But for the fact that he knew the Doctor would be anxious and eager for a report of the state of affairs, and just what had been said and done, and by whom, he would have turned back. Of course, Vergie had long since retired.

Sure enough, the Doctor was waiting for him, and was eager for information. There was so little, however, to be told that Simonson only stood in the hall below, hat in hand, and briefly related all that had transpired, omitting, of course, the part he had taken, and all personal epithets. When done, Dr. Culpepper thanked him heartily, and said:

"Mr. Simonson, I want you to know and *feel* that you are always welcome at The Elms; and whenever I can serve you in any way, please always bear in mind I shall consider myself honored by your commands."

The young lawyer thanked the Doctor for his kindness and was turning to go, when a mellow, vibrant voice from above called:

"Mr. Simonson!"

"Upon my word, Mr. Simonson, it's Vergie waiting for you. You'll have to run up a minute and give her the news, or she won't sleep any tonight. Woman's curiosity, you know," he added, with a smile.

Vergie *was* waiting for him. Standing in the center of



the room, with the light burning low, dressed in a dainty, filmy *chemise de nuit*, another gauzy robe falling gracefully about her, her hair flowing in an ebon torrent to her waist, her eyes glowing, her breast gently rising and falling, and her face illuminated with a welcome more eloquent than words could express, she smiled and bade him enter.

"You need not repeat what you told Papa, for I overheard it all. Besides, Harold, concealed, was an eye-witness, and has given me some details which you did not relate to Papa—the sleeping potion, for instance, you administered, *surgically*, and *without instruments*, to old Bill Jason, the wife-beater.

"But," and she now placed both hands on his arm, "we were interrupted tonight, and there are some things I so much wish to say, and you to know."

She was very close to him and he could see the outline of her lithe and sinuous body, the marble-white of her throat, through which a faint rose-tint was rising, and the perfect curve of her lips that seemed to invite kisses.

"Could you — *would* you — come again to-morrow evening?" If there was lacking aught of cordiality in her words or manner—and there was not—it was more than atoned for by the witchery of her wistful, pleading eyes.

*Would* he return? Would flowers refuse to leap into Resurrection life and celestial glory at the awakening kiss of the Easter-sun? Would the wild migrating swan in the far North refuse the lure of Southern climes when the autumn chill has come? Do ocean tides ever refuse obedience to laws primeval—perhaps eternal? Certainly not! They obey the fundamental laws of their being. Ah? And Samuel Simonson and Virginia Lee Culpepper, they——?

An hour later, as Vergie was retiring, the parrot, disturbed and possibly hungry, with a raucous voice, shrieked, "Polly wants a cracker! Polly wants a cra-acker!"

"So—do—I," Vergie responded.

Her maid, in the adjoining room, hearing her mistress, brought her a bowl of bread and milk, and couldn't understand why Vergie refused it. And Vergie, with a glad laugh that was good to hear, said: "You dear thing, you don't *quite* understand what I want. But no matter now; go to bed, please."

## CHAPTER XII

DEFECTIONS—GILDERSLEEVE, GOLDBECK, HAROLD CULPEPPER

IN great crises the kaleidoscope of events seemingly revolves rapidly, and there are many surprises. Then men seem to change their opinions, even their principles, overnight; suddenly to become basely inconsistent, and to justify the charge of treason to their former doctrines and associates. This is because men in great and solemn crises hold counsel in the deep silences and solitudes of their consciences, investigate by stealth, act warily, and do not assume the new position resolved upon till everything is settled beyond peradventure. Were men to do all their thinking aloud, to keep their mental processes exposed to public gaze, as Hegel is said to have done, and to sound each successive evolution on a megaphone in the public square, there would be no dramatic surprises, or surprises of any sort. Hence, darkness is the bating place of conspiracy, and secrecy the conspirator's native air, whether the conspirators and the conspiracies be good or evil.

Thus New Richmond, the Northern Gibraltar of the Southern Confederacy, was shocked by a number of startling sensations.

The first, in order of unexpectedness and dramatic quality, was the defection to Lincoln and the Union of Harold Culpepper.

The second was a calm and judicial statement issued by Judge Gildersleeve, published in the local papers, that, everything considered, he felt himself duty-bound to support Mr.



Lincoln in all honorable endeavors to restore the Union to its original *status quo*.

The third was a brief interview with New Richmond's wealthiest citizen and leading banker, Mr. Hiram Goldbeck, published in the Chicago dailies. Mr. Goldbeck, being in Chicago, attending the annual convention of the National Bankers' Association, felt constrained to say to the reporters that, for the sake of business, the safeguarding and encouragement of our vast commercial and industrial enterprises, and the maintenance of the public credit, he had concluded that it was his duty to come out boldly, regardless of consequences, for the Union.

When the young lawyer came out of The Elms, after bidding Vergie good-night, to his surprise, he found her brother at the gate.

"Why, Harold, what are you doing here? Standing guard?"

"Waiting for you, Mr. Simonson," not observing the jest. "Do you mind if I walk up to your room with you? Or maybe you're going to your office first."

"Glad to have you, Harold. Have a weed? Ah, you've got a match. I'm going to my office first, and there's no one with whom I'd rather have a quiet smoke and visit than yourself."

"Does me good to hear you say that. I was afraid you'd never forgive Vergie, and that you'd always hold a grudge against us."

"Vergie? Miss Culpepper? Never forgive your sister? Why——" He looked up and, seeing Harold eyeing him humorously, checked himself.

"That's all right, old man. Of course you like Vergie, and I think all the more of you for it. In my heart I knew you couldn't hold out against her—nobody can. Even

Quoth Horace has to give in to her. But if I do say it myself, no brother ever had a finer sister: pure as an angel, sweeter than honeydew, quick to anger but quicker to penitence—that's Vergie!" He flicked the ashes from his cigar and took a fresh light.

"Mr. Simonson,"—there was a long pause. Simonson was busy putting away some papers and, for the time, didn't observe Harold's silence; in fact, was not conscious of the young man's presence. Presently, however, he looked up and said, "Well?"

"I'm going to tell you something, Simonson—something I've not told anyone. Just why I should tell you, instead of some of my more intimate friends, I don't know. Maybe it's because I like you and believe in you. I don't want you to argue with me, for I've made up my mind and you can't change it—nobody can change it. I'm a Culpepper, you know. I don't want you to say anything to me unless I ask you to; nor will I promise to answer any questions. Is it agreed?"

"All right, Harold. Blaze away."

"I'm going to leave home tonight to enlist in the Union army."

"What! Leave home? Join the Union army? Are you joking, or simply—*crazy?*"

"No, I'm not joking, and I'm not crazy."

"When did you make up your mind?"

"Don't know. Been making it up a long while."

"Since when?"

"Couldn't say. Always talking politics at our house. You know, Jefferson Davis and Mother are cousins."

"And you're going to——"

"That'll do, Simonson. I've gone over the whole ground—*fought* over it! Good God, I feel bad enough about it."

The young man's face, usually the mirror of good cheer, now was pinched and drawn.

"Tell me about it, anyway. Let's talk it over. You astonish me."

"Well, to begin, my interest in this affair dates back to the debate two years ago. Father and I went down to Egypto. Of course, Father was carried away with Douglas, and so was I; but—somehow I liked Lincoln, too. Lincoln seemed to feel so bad about the way things were going. Douglas didn't seem to care a damn—but Lincoln *did* care. Then Douglas was so rough, just bullyragged Lincoln all the time—in fact, wasn't decent; but Lincoln was a perfect gentleman, and that grave and gentle and considerate I couldn't keep from admiring him. Then Douglas was haughty, and had such a *strut*, while Lincoln was humble and modest and not at all stuck up. But most of all was I touched by Lincoln's pathetic solemnity and deep earnestness. Douglas was hilarious and boisterous, and had a sort of don't-care-a-damn air about him, but Lincoln—well, he was *different*.

"When the debate was over, Father and I went down to the hotel where they were stopping. Going in, we met them as they were going out to supper together. Both spoke to Father and shook hands with him. Then Douglas said to me, 'Hello, Bub,' and passed on—didn't offer to shake hands. But Lincoln reached away down, seemed about a mile, and took my hand, and said something about my 'noble father,' that's the way he put it, and said he was a Kentuckian, too, but a mighty poor sample, he was afraid, referring to himself, you know, and that he had married a Kentucky girl—finest stock in the world—and his face lighted up with a wonderful smile; and I somehow wondered how people could so hate him.



"Well, that was the beginning; and I began thinking, and I've been thinking ever since.

"Then Lincoln was elected, and I knew hell would be to pay. If we could have gagged the preachers, and cut the throats of the politicians, things would have quieted down. and there'd have been no war. But God! They roared like howling dervishes, on the stump and in the pulpit. Preachers meant all right—best men in the world, but got no sense. Why can't preachers keep out of politics, and keep politics out of the pulpit? They're sent to preach heaven, and not to raise hell. Am I right, Simonson?"

"Keep to your text, old man. Preachers are not in the text—at least, now. Go on, old man." The young lawyer was smiling, but deeply interested.

"Well, soon after—last February, wasn't it?—you came—you and that jackass Palfrey. And about the time you two blew in, Mother's letter from Uncle Jeff was lost. Say, we know that screech was found—no doubt about that—but by whom, or who's got it now, we've never been able to find out.

"Then Uncle Jeff set up his Government down South and, of course, our folks were inflated; 'a *President* in our family, I want you to know. The dear Mater could hardly contain herself. Sister was a whole lunatic asylum, with an annex; and good old Quoth Horace wanted to have a bonfire. Would, I guess, if it hadn't been for old Lex-et-Justitia, my to-be Pater-in-Lex, who said it would never do.

"I didn't let on but I was with them—did my stunt, danced a jig, and rattled my tambourine a time or two when it came my turn. Remember the bluff I run on you the first time we met—that evening down at the Judge's?

"But all the time I was reading, thinking, trying to make up my mind. Hot water? Well, I should say, with a dash of *tobasco* out of a tank just tapped.

"Do you remember the speech Jack made in Congress the

day after Uncle Jeff set up shop in Mon? Oh, it was a hummer! Hot off the bat, too! The gist of it was: 'You Southern states haven't the right to go, and you shan't go!' Well, I was already under conviction, as the Methodists say, and what Jack said—that's what we call Logan down here—made a powerful impression on my mind.

"Then Abe Lincoln's turn at the bat came—say, Simonson, did you read that inaugural of his? I did, but down at old Ams' shop on the sly. Quoth Horace tore it out of the paper before he brought the paper home. And I said to myself, 'Old Abe, well done! Washington never did as well; for you're kinder, and gentler, and have more love in your heart than any man that ever lived, except the Saviour.'

"After that I watched the South. I said, 'That'll touch 'em. They never can resist that heartbreaking appeal!' But, no, sir; they got madder than ever. Not long after—a week, maybe—Mother got another letter from Uncle Jeff, and, oh, it was nasty. Called Lincoln all sorts o' names—'Tyrant,' and 'Tsar,' and 'Oppressor'; and Northern folks, 'Yankees,' and 'Shopkeepers,' and 'Moneygrubbers,' and 'Nigger-worshippers.'

"Oh, I was in a state of grace, all right. I swore like hades, but all on the inside.

"Then they tore down 'Old Glory' at Charleston, and I was fighting mad; and when it came to that, Quoth Horace gave in a little. I could see that it hurt, but he stood by his guns. 'Take down that flag, Son,' he said to me. Mother always kept a flag draped about a picture of some old ancestor of ours who signed the Declaration. Down I took it, but getting madder and madder every heart-throb. 'What shall I do with it, Father?' I said; 'throw it in the fire?' Had he said, yes, I meant to defy him then and there. But, to my surprise, he loosened up, and I saw tears in his eyes—and you know Quoth Horace isn't of the weepy sort—

nay, nay, sweet Alma May! And he said, 'No, my son, my boy; fold it up gently and lay it away. Some day reason and tolerance may return to my countrymen, and once more we can proudly unfold it to receive the kisses of the sun and the benediction of the skies. For it has a great and glorious history, and I love it, love it, even as I love my country!'—meaning only half of it, however, the *Southern* half. And do you know, Simonson. old Quoth Horace actually caught it up in his arms, kissed it, and wept like a baby. And I said to myself, low, so he wouldn't hear me, 'Damn the niggers!' And, like a flash, I thought of *Lincoln*, just as I saw him down at Egypto pleading for the niggers. And I thought, 'Maybe, after all, slavery's *wrong*! But, whether right or wrong, Uncle Jeff and his Government's going to keep them, even if they have to smash everything to smithereens.' And I was hotter than ever.

"But at last Douglas redeemed himself. Poor fellow! he's dead now, yonder by the inland sea—died, we all know, of a broken heart. In purpose he was all right, only crazed and hardened by ambition—just like lawyers and doctors sometimes—yes, and even preachers. And when a *preacher* gets ambitious to *shine*, he's—well, the limit. Oh, yes, I'm orthodox. With all my heart I pray, in the language of the Prayer Book, 'From all such, good Lord, deliver us!'

"Tired, Simonson? I'm wearing you out, ain't I? But you know I'm going tonight, old man, and this is my valedictory—sort of an '*Apologia pro vita sua*,' as dear old Quoth Horace would say—dearest old daddy that ever lived!

"But there isn't much more to say. Lincoln's message to Congress on the Fourth finished my conversion; and the Battle of Bull Run set me on fire. I'd have gone then, but—but you know what happened that night, and I couldn't leave Vergie; and somehow I couldn't leave without trying to make things right with you. And then that sneak—you



know whom I mean—Palfrey—was here trying to marry Vergie, and——”

“*What!* Felix Palfrey trying to marry *Vergie Culpepper!* Why, was she in love with *him?*” The young lawyer had suddenly leaped to his feet.

“If she had been, guess she’d have married him.”

“But——”

“Let’s stick to the text, old man!” Harold said, with a wan smile. Then, relenting, “We’re under obligations to you, Simonson, and you’re all right; so I’ll speak frankly. At first Vergie liked him. You yourself know that he was apparently the correct thing: four X’s, title blown in the bottle, imperial seal in red, two rows of decorations, s. p. q. r., xyz, &c.! Then he was highly accomplished and, withal, was so excruciatingly funny in the *rôle* of his *alter ego*—clown, monkey, babboon, and punch-and-judy show, all in one; and when old Ams and the rest, but especially old Ams, wool completely pulled over their eyes, would ask such silly questions, and gravely swallow whole his absurd answers, Vergie would scream with laughter. As a trifler, Palfrey was all right, and as a diversion his mission was all O. K., but when Vergie came to realize that he meant to deliver this community, or as much of it as possible, over to Uncle Jeff’s Government, not in a fair and open manner, but by *trickery* and *fraud*, she hated him. And Vergie’s hatred, once aroused, is something terrible.”

Harold paused and looked long and earnestly at the young lawyer. There was a look of wistfulness, almost entreaty, in his face. He had a reputation for wildness—not exactly bad, flagitiously evil, yet—well, there were parents who would not have welcomed him as a suitor for their daughter’s hand. The young lawyer had heard these rumors and, from what he had seen, more than half believed them—

though he confessed he had no positive knowledge of wrongdoing on the young man's part. But now there was a look of sublimity, exaltation, in his countenance that could not be denied. The young lawyer saw it, felt it, was *awed* by it. Sometimes, when deeply moved by a great and worthy emotion, the best that is in us rises and shines in our faces—Moses, the martyr Stephen, Christ at the Transfiguration. It is called the solar light; perhaps in some cases it is even more than that. At any rate, Harold had it, and the young lawyer was awed by it.

"Simonson," he began slowly, "I wronged you once and I don't want to repeat it. Such things are not pleasant to remember, especially when going away, as I am, without saying good-bye to anybody except you—and, maybe, *not* to return. I was jealous of you, afraid you were going to win Marjorie away from me—that is, when you came to New Richmond. My God, how I dreaded you!—yes, and hated you. Somehow I had a premonition that you would fall in love with her; and I knew, after you'd been here a month, that, if you entered the list, Marjorie's father would favor your suit. Even of Marjorie herself, though we were engaged, I had my doubts: and 'twixt hate and jealousy, I said every damaging thing I could against you. Oh, I know it was devilish mean, and I'm heartily ashamed of it; and all the more because I know my fears were groundless. Of course, you never cared for Marjorie as I do, and I reckon Marjorie never regarded you other than as a friend whom she highly esteemed."

He paused and looked at the young lawyer for affirmation. The young lawyer's heart was in a tumult, and he was fearful that it would betray him. In his soul it was Independence Day evening again, and he was drinking in Marjorie's kisses—kisses as passionate, and as freely given, as his own

—and feeling the wayward tress of her hair on his brow, and the close nestling of her body against his breast, and seeing in her eyes the message that has moved men of every age and clime to ecstasy. “Oh, why has Harold mentioned Marjorie?” the young lawyer said to himself, “and that, too, just when leaving! Why this barbed arrow, carelessly flung, yet piercing my heart till I feel I must cry aloud?”

Vergie—ah, she was forgotten. It seems cruel, but is not the spiritual forever triumphant over the material? Vergie, with her sinuous beauty and exuberant vitality, had set all his senses a-tingle; but with Marjorie, while there had been none the less of the vital—a vitality that had caused her to tremble as he held her in his arms that night—yet there had also been a something else—a higher, diviner something added thereto. But he must say something.

“Then everything is satisfactory with you, Harold. I sincerely congratulate you.” He felt guilty of at least ambiguity, but he could think of nothing better to say. At any rate, he hoped that would end the matter—but he was mistaken.

“Satisfactory? Oh, no, old man. Everything is all right. We’re to be married—sometime. I can depend on her, for she’s the soul of honor; but she utterly refuses to name the day. And then—oh, it’s foolishness, I know, to mention such matters, Simonson, but somehow I must talk to-night—she allows me no *privileges*. I know the philosophical way of looking at it, but hang it all! I’m not a philosopher, and never will be. Your high and mighty Professor Highbrow would calmly say: ‘All right! Not a single kiss or embrace till after we’re married? All right, all right. Just keep them for me till then—I can wait.’ But I’m not Professor Highbrow—yet that’s Marjorie’s inflexible edict. And I *must* wait. I do wonder, old man, if Marjorie really has any emotion or passion at all.



"I've even tried to make her jealous—thought that would help. You know Edythe Fernleaf, the grass-widow. Well, I've been taking her out riding, and to some parties, and we're actually corresponding now, and Marjorie knows it; but—well, it's no use. Marjorie's simply *unbudgeable*. Of course I feel like a damned villain to be trifling with Edythe; for even though she's a grass-widow, she's a noble woman, and's had sorrow; and she's devilish sweet and gentle and—and *comforting*.

"One other matter, Simonson, and then I'm going—it's concerning Vergie. Strange, isn't it, that though I don't know you, I believe in you? But for this I wouldn't say what I'm going to say."

Again he paused, and the same anxious look, wan and pleading, which the young lawyer once before had noticed, again came into his eyes.

"Simonson, I don't know whether you care anything for Vergie or not, and it's not becoming in me to catechize you. There is every reason why you should *not* like her; besides, you hardly know her. And yet I have another of my persistent premonitions that you do, or are going to—maybe are going to have for her the same feeling I have for Marjorie. Now, you'll forgive me for saying this, won't you, old man? And especially when it's my own sister I'm talking about.

"As to Vergie's feeling for you I know nothing; but here again I have that same premonition I already have mentioned, though she'd never forgive me if she knew, or ever were to learn, of this conversation. If I do say it, Vergie's a wonderful girl—the sort that in the elder day founded great universities, and states, and empires, and rode to battle in war-chariots; and, when fierce maritime powers were struggling in life-and-death grapple for sea-supremacy, in person commanded great navies; and that—sometimes fell

—from their high estate—not from onslaught of outer enemy, but, even more masterful and imperious, hurling defiance at convention, by their sex-self, sex-conquered.

“Forgive me, Simonson. I’m becoming melodramatic; but I’m not quite myself tonight. The thoughts and passions of two years, rising each day a little higher, have now reached their climax. Across the Rubicon I hear the call; but I shrink a little—just a little.

“It is only this I want to say: If you and Vergie ever should come to care for each other—if that wonderful thing we clumsily, and without poetry or vision, call love—love for each other—should knock at the door of your hearts, and both of you should joyfully extend hospitality, remember that you have the blessing and infinite good-will of Vergie’s brother. And, as you value your soul, you will shield and safeguard her honor!”

As if waking from a dream, the young lawyer now for the first time fully realized that Harold Culpepper was going away without anyone’s consent, without anyone’s knowledge, even, save his own—to fight for a cause his whole family hated, against a cause as dear to them as their lives—and that it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to ever obtain forgiveness for the step he was about to take. But it was not too late for him to reconsider; even yet he could turn back if he only would. Realizing, in a measure at least, the gravity, even awfulness, of the resolve Harold was about to put into execution, he attempted to dissuade him.

“No use, old man,” was his only response. “I’m a Kentuckian. Have you noticed that Kentucky has *not* gone out of the Union, though Uncle Jeff is trying, over the protests of lawful authority—that is, the people of the commonwealth—to ‘subjugate’ it, and to ‘coerce’ it, and even now has in it an ‘army of invasion’? If you ever talk this matter over

with Father, tell him that I am, at least so far as *our* state is concerned, a States' Rights man; that I'm fighting that our dear old Kentucky may have the privilege of shaping her own destiny without outside interference. Good-bye, Mr. Simonson."

"Good-bye, Harold! May the good God ever have you in his keeping!"

Harold Culpepper was gone to join Grant's command.

The young lawyer looked at his watch. It was almost three o'clock. At five Harold would take the train at Enochsburg. As he looked out into the starlit night he saw the dim outline of a horse and horseman as they turned at the southwest corner of the public square and faced due west—and for a minute only heard the rhythmical hoof-beats of the sinewy and fleet-limbed Kentucky Morgan. With a deep sigh, and a heart full of contending emotions, he closed the door.

A moment he stood debating whether it were worth while to go to bed. As sleep would be impossible in his present frame of mind, he concluded he would not retire. He glanced about for a book to read, and was about to take up a volume of Webster's Speeches, when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps and, a moment later, a vigorous rap on the door. Opening the door, a stranger entered.

"Mr. Simonson?"

The young lawyer bowed.

"Mr. Samuel Simonson, lawyer?"

Again the young lawyer bowed, wondering who his nocturnal visitor could be.

"Can you identify yourself, Mr. Simonson? I mean at this hour."

"Perhaps it would be just as well," the young lawyer



retorted, not ungraciously, however, "for *you* to identify yourself. I have an uncomfortable way sometimes, being a lawyer, of seriously interfering with the movements and operations of strangers."

The stranger smiled. "You're quite correct, sir. I'm a special messenger from the Western Union office at Enochsburg. I have a telegram. It came, as you will presently see, presuming that you are 'Samuel Simonson, Lawyer'—it is now 3 o'clock—at 2:05. It is necessary that the proper party should have the message immediately."

"Whom is it from?"

"I am not at liberty to tell. If you'll be so kind as to identify yourself, I'll be obliged to you."

"Huh! Whom can I reach at this hour?"

"The livery barn is open—a team's just arrived. I also saw a light at the hotel. The two proprietors will do."

Happily, Nic Tutwiler and Ham Singleton were at their respective places of business. Signing their names to a receipt, already signed by the young lawyer, the telegram was produced.

The young lawyer offered the messenger a generous gratuity, which was firmly but civilly declined, and, thanking his neighbors for their kindness, returned to his office.

When he opened the telegram he discovered why it had been delivered so promptly—and also why the messenger had exercised such unusual caution. It was from the President:

"Executive Mansion,

"Washington, Oct. 8, 1861.

"Mr. Samuel Simonson: I am naturally solicitous for the approval and support of my own state, but am somewhat worried and alarmed by rumors of plottings by secret agents of the insurgent government in your neck of the woods. What do you know about a certain Felix Palfrey, and the

character of his work? I would like to talk over with you the political situation in Southern Illinois. Also the sentiment of Southern Illinois regarding the war now in progress, and especially of such as are of Southern extraction. Could you come to Washington—at once? The Twelfth would suit me best; but a day later or earlier will make no material difference.

A. LINCOLN."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE OLD SOUTH AND THE NEW—PASSION BAFFLED

WHEN sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions," averred the Bard of Avon, and the young lawyer found it so.

The summons of the President is as the command of Royalty; but how could he go to Washington at once? The October session of the Circuit Court was to convene that morning.

Through the good offices of Judge Gildersleeve, he had several important cases: for the National Collectors' Association against a shyster firm that had disposed of a stock of goods, at cut prices, and tried to escape without paying for it; for the Illinois Central against the Tipton-Raymond Milling Company; for the Government against the Maple Creek counterfeiters; and yet a fourth—the first of many such cases—in which the right to sell mules and horses to the direct or indirect agents of the Confederacy was called in question. It was to be a test case, and Simonson was to represent the Attorney-General.

The suit against the Tipton-Raymond Milling Company was first on the docket. But for that case he could get away without difficulty, as there were several cases before the next in which he was interested. But for *that* case, and for his *best* client, the Illinois Central——

Wearily rising, he put on his hat. "I always could think better on a full stomach. Besides, a breath of bracing Octo-



ber air will do me good. Feel pretty punk after being up all night."

It was early, but breakfast had been called, and he went in and sat down at a table near an open window. Two strangers were at the table, and he bowed to them as he took up his napkin and unfolded it.

"Pardon me," said the elder of the two, "are you Mr. Simonson?"

"I plead guilty to the indictment," pleasantly.

"Mr. Tutwiler, our amiable Saint Boniface, told us you were an early riser. Glad to meet you. I am Frederick Stanton, of Longmont, and this is Judge Sexton, of St. Louis."

Acknowledging the introduction, the young lawyer said: "I'm especially glad to form your acquaintance in advance as we are soon to engage in battle-royal. You represent, I believe, the Tipton-Raymond Milling Company, and I am counsel for the Illinois Central."

"The pleasure is ours, Mr. Simonson," Judge Sexton replied, "and we count ourselves very fortunate to meet you thus early; you see, we have a favor to ask of you."

"Suppose you want me to consent to *nolle prosequi*," with a smile.

"How's that, Stanton?" said the Judge, with a chuckle. "Don't that remind you of Lincoln? Just what he'd have said." Then, turning to the young lawyer, "Not exactly a *nolle prosse*, though you might as well, for of course we'll thrash you out of your boots. Why, Simonson, you've got no case at all, not even a *cork* leg to stand on. But then we wouldn't miss the fight for anything. Have more fun than a cage of monkeys. But, seriously," becoming grave and thoughtful, "we have a favor to ask of you."

"Yes? Want me to swallow a seidlitz powder, I suppose. But excuse me, gentlemen, what is it you desire?"

"A postponement."

"On what grounds, Judge Sexton?" Though inwardly rejoicing at the unexpected request, the young lawyer was striving to look as stern as possible. "You know the Illinois Central has a clear case against your clients, and they're determined to carry the war into Africa. They have been mercilessly robbed of thousands of acres of the finest timber, and they feel especially bitter against the Tipton-Raymond Milling Company. However, I don't feel like crowding the mourners. State your case."

"It's impossible for two of our main witnesses to be present at this term of the Circuit Court."

"Ah? Unavoidably detained? In the penitentiary?"

"Not that, Mr. Simonson," replied Judge Sexton, trying hard to maintain his gravity. "One is down with typhoid fever, a very bad case, I assure you; the other is laid up with a broken leg. Here are certificates from their physicians."

"All right," replied the young lawyer, with seeming reluctance. "See Judge Gildersleeve, and if he consents, I shall interpose no objections." He knew it would make no difference to the Judge, and the request for a postponement, however valid the grounds, would look bad for the Tipton-Raymond Milling Company.

With a much lighter heart, he returned to his office. He now would pack up and go to Washington. His spirits rose at the thought of seeing Lincoln again—of the honor he had no thought. The National Capitol, the Supreme Court, Congress, renowned men and monuments—all well enough in their way; but *Lincoln!* Yes, he would hear a few of the great speakers: in the House, Thad Stevens, of course, Dan Voorhees and Roscoe Conkling; and in the Senate, Sumner and Fessenden, and, if possible, Sherman and Crittenden. He regretted that Davis and Toombs and Benja-

min were no longer there. But, better than all, best of all, he would hear Lincoln's voice, and look into his kindly face. Yes, he would take a week off—two days each way for the journey, and three days in Washington. Later he recalled that Congress was not in session; but it mattered nothing, since Lincoln was there, and he was going to see him.

"Pretty good old world, after all," he was saying to himself, when Dr. Culpepper entered his office. The Doctor's eyes were bloodshot and his face flushed, except his lips—they were ashen and twitching. Without preliminaries, he sternly asked:

"Where's my son Harold?"

The young lawyer was so startled, for the moment, by the Doctor's appearance and hostile bearing, he was unable to collect his thoughts.

"I say, sir, where's my son Harold?"

"Really, Dr. Culpepper, how should I know? I ~~don't~~ know where he is," stammered the young lawyer.

"A very clumsy evasion, and you're by no means a ~~good~~ actor. Why don't you become melodramatic and throw up your hands and exclaim, 'Harold gone? For the love of heaven, isn't he at home, safe and sound?' Come, Mr. Simonson, out with it! You know very well that Harold's gone."

The young lawyer was nauseous, sick at heart. Though blameless in the matter of Harold's disappearance, he began to see that the Doctor could never be brought to see his innocence. "Why do you come to me to find out about Harold?" he managed to say.

"Ah, you know my boy's gone; you don't deny it. If you were really as innocent as you would have me think you are, you would express genuine surprise and astonishment. Yes, I'll tell you why I've come to you: You two spent the night together—at least, from the time you left



my house till three o'clock in the morning. You were the last person with whom he conversed. And you know where he is *now*."

The Doctor was so woe-begone in appearance, despite his wrath—a wrath the young lawyer could neither mollify or condemn—he felt a sudden accession of pity.

"Please, Dr. Culpepper, sit down. You are tired. Have this easy chair."

The Doctor ignored the invitation. "Mike Heidler, the night watch, saw you coming from The Elms a little before midnight; he saw you, deeply engaged in conversation, enter your office. Not understanding why the two of you should stay up all night, he kept an eye on your office. About three o'clock your door opened on the landing outside the building. Mike was standing across the street, in the Court House yard. You parleyed a moment, apparently disputing about something, then shook hands. You re-entered your office, but Harold proceeded down stairs and disappeared, mounted on Black Devil. Mike Heidler saw him plainly, as did also Ham Singleton and Nic Tutweiler. He dashed down the street, turned at the Porter corner, and went out on the Enochsburg Road. Haven't I got it straight? Answer me!"

"The facts, Dr. Culpepper, tally with your statement." the young lawyer knew it would be folly to equivocate.

A look of both relief and triumph came to the Doctor's face. "That's more like it, Simonson. Now, tell me the rest—all of it. Come, speak up like a man!"

The young lawyer liked the Doctor and didn't want to hurt his feelings. To tell him that Harold had espoused the Federal Union, and had gone to join Grant's command, would be like plunging a dagger in the good man's heart. He thought, too, of the inevitable breach between father and son, of the sister's grief, of the mother's anguish of soul.

No!—the Doctor's information must come from some other source. Then,—

"No, Dr. Culpepper, I can't tell you where Harold is, or where he's gone."

"You mean to say you won't, do you? You think you can browbeat and bullyrag me as you did that mob of skunks last night, do you?" The Doctor was beside himself with rage.

"Pray, Doctor, who is being browbeaten and bullyragged—you or I?" said the young lawyer, trying to pacify him.

"Don't 'pray Doctor' me, you ornery whelp. Once more! I'll give you this one more chance—will you, or will you not, answer me?"

"Then if I *must* answer 'yes' or 'no,' my answer is: No, I will not tell you. I'm sorry, Doctor; but I cannot."

With the litheness of a much younger man, the infuriated Doctor aimed a furious blow full at the young lawyer's face. "Damn you, take that!" But the young lawyer quickly stepped aside, and the blow went wild. But with an even greater fury the Doctor made another lunge, this time with better success. The young lawyer partially warded off the blow, but only in part. His vision suddenly was blurred, and he felt a trickle of blood running down his cheek.

The rugged form of Amsden Armentrout dashed in between them.

"W'at's a' this foos aboot?" he thundered.

The Doctor glared at the burly Abolitionist with the rage of a lion blazing, terribly, in his eyes.

"Yuh need no stah ut meh 'at wy. Ah wan' yuh t' ken thet ane man's no skeered o' ye e'en gin ye're uh damn' Kaintuck'un. Air ye no 'shamed o' yersel'—coom oop tae Simonson's orfus 'n' troiy yo' damndus' t' muhduh 'im; un unly las' nicht 'e wuz bravin' a' th' deils in hell tae save yir orn'ry hoid. Yuh wan' tae ken whah Hahr'l' is, un Ah ken—

mair'n 'at, Ah'm mighty gled t' tull yuh. Ah'm no feard uh huhtin' yo' feelin's, 'n' Ah'm nae feard o' yo'. Yist'day Hahr'l' wes en ma shop, un ez 'e raid uh paipuh Ah haird 'im saiyn', sortuh tae himsel': 'Ah've gat tae dae ut! Ah've gat tae dae ut!' Ut thet 'e flang th' paipuh doon 'n' gaed oot—un ye'd hae thocht 'e wes foutin' med, 'e wes thut warked oop; thoo naebod'y'd sed uh ward, uh coontrahried 'im en onywy. Boot ez 'e mosied oot Ah seed 'im cleench 'iz fis', un haird 'im sortuh hef-whuspuh, fearce-lak, 'Ah'll dae ut tae-nicht, uvun gin ut rains hell-fiah 'n' brumstane.' Un w'en 'e gaed oot Ah pucked oop th' paipuh hu'd ben raidin'. Et wusna muckle biggeh'n yo' twa hen's. Et wes Lincoln's 'Ca' fuh Vol'nteesh' tae gae'n put doon thuz damn' Rubul-lyon. Un Har'l' gane tae jine thae Unyun airmeh, 'n' t' hep shoot hell oot o' yo' Cozzun Jaiff's 'tahnal Suth'rn 'Fud'r'cy—un Ah honuh 'im fuh it. Hoo dive ye lak thet?"

There was a moment's pause and Dr. Cuipepper turned to the young lawyer for denial or affirmation, confident that he knew.

The young lawyer nodded affirmation as the blacksmith roared, "Yus, an' Ah thank Gude Ah hed uh han' in sendin' 'im!"

Just how it was done the young lawyer never knew; but in a moment the blacksmith was lying prone on the floor, unconscious, eyes open and staring, while the side of his head, dark purple and already clotted with blood, seemed to be crushed to pulp. A heavy iron poker, yet in the Doctor's hand, proclaimed the instrument that had been used.

All the Doctor's wrath was spent. Awe-stricken, he said, "Great God, Simonson! Have I killed Amsden, my good old neighbor? Let me examine him."

"No, Dr. Culpepper—go! Send Dr. Boynton—he's your friend, isn't he?"

"But what are you going to do with me? It will kill



Mother if you have me arrested and locked up—and just now that Harold's gone."

"Have no fear, Doctor. The provocation was great. I'm sorry for you. *Get out!* Get Dr. Boynton here quickly as possible."

A careful examination revealed that the blacksmith was seriously, though not necessarily fatally, hurt. He was quietly removed to the room at the rear of his shop, and the Odd Fellows promptly sent a fellow-member to take care of him.

After putting the room in order the young lawyer went across to Dornblazer & Russell's drug store for a little arnica and a bit of court-plaster. It had been more than an hour since the encounter and his face was swollen and beginning to hurt. When he returned Vergie, to his surprise, and a measure of mortification on account of his slight disfigurement, was waiting for him. As he entered she said:

"See the conquering hero comes!" She did not rise; and he observed that her face was stern, and her voice harsh. Wishing, however, to be agreeable, he replied:

"I am honored by your presence, Miss Culpepper."

"I do not covet the honor, Mr. Simonson," she replied coldly, "but I'm glad I came even though to do so I had to disobey my revered father."

"What can she mean?" the young lawyer said to himself. "Innocent of any wrong, I am—why should I be flaunted in this manner?" Then a great feeling of pity and compassion came over him. She was sick—even yet. Her hands were thin, and her countenance was exceedingly pale. And she was sorrowful. Harold—comrade, playfellow, only brother—was gone, where she did not know. Her mother was in declining health; he knew they were alarmed about her condition. Their constant peril, too, from mob violence; they must be constantly anxious. He knew they feared the

head of the family would be assassinated. Now on his long and fatiguing professional drives they never suffered him to go alone. He thought of all the beautiful things Harold had said about his sister; how, in a manner, he had committed her to his care. Almost his last speech had been about Vergie, indirectly appealing to him to watch over her and shield her from harm. A certain mesmeric influence, emanating from her person, was stealing over him and he gladly yielded himself to the spell. Finally she broke the silence.

"Mr. Simonson, you know better than we do that my brother is gone—for to us, even yet, it seems that, presently, we shall wake as from a dreadful dream and, after all, happily find that Harold still is with us. It's the first time he ever has left us, except when he went away to college—and that was hard for us to bear. But then we had this consolation: we knew where he was; that he was with high-minded, honorable people; that he was always receiving the kindest treatment, and had everything heart could wish for save our presence, and the happy home life he had always known; and that should evil befall him, or sickness, we would be instantly notified so that we could go to him, or he be brought to us. Mr. Simonson, I know you are not deaf, but can you understand?"

"Only in part, Miss Culpepper, and even that part imperfectly. Such a home as your's I never had; such care as you describe never was mine; such love as you lavished on brother and son I have caught glimpses of only in fairy tales. You know who my parents are. They never seemed to care for me. Mine has been a cheerless life. Only plenty of hard knocks and hardest work—but I do not complain."

Vergie's face was a study while the young lawyer was speaking. There were pity, the surge of the mother-instinct,

the glow of a sheltering and comforting compassion—but she fought it all back.

“Now my brother is gone again,” presently she resumed, “but how different the manner of his going, his destination, the purposes actuating him, the manner of his new life, and his unescapable associations. Oh, I do not doubt Mr. Lincoln’s sincerity, or the sincerity of those who are at-one with him. You see I am not as—as prejudiced as Papa. I can see, too, that in your way you are all patriots. In that respect you see we are broader than you are. You patriotically say, ‘We want self-government for ourselves,’ and we reply: ‘All right;’ but when we, none the less patriotically, say, ‘*We* want self-government for *ourselves*,’ you answer: ‘All wrong!’ But let that pass.

“If brother only had joined the Confederate army—Oh, that would have been hard for us, too, but we’d have consented. In fact, we expected that he’d do so sooner or later.

“But to think that *our* boy, our *only* boy, should be in arms against Uncle Jeff, and Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson, and the grand and glorious South—Oh, isn’t it sweet sometimes just to hate, hate, *hate*?” She was shaken with the violence of her emotions and paused. Presently—

“Yes, in a general way we know where Harold’s gone, to whom, and what for: to espouse the Union cause, to join Grant’s command in Missouri, and to fight against our own people. Old Amsden Armentrout—Oh, I’m *so* sorry Papa struck him!”

She covered her face with her handkerchief, as if to shield her eyes from some horrible sight; when she removed it he saw that they were moist with tears.

“But who, I say, has turned this whole community against us? Even the mob was shouting *for* Papa not long ago; last night they had only *hisses*. A few weeks ago they would



have crowned him; now they would crucify him. Who has done all this?"

She was now gazing at the young lawyer with open hatred, scorn, loathing.

"But now the very elect are against us. For some of them we do not care. Their enthusiastic loyalty to our great Cause was their one redeeming virtue; that gone there's nothing left but hulks of repulsive carrion, such as weenty-teenty Voey Bijawey, ugh! And Hank Gordon, ready to barter his soul for another term in the postoffice. And Professor Henry St. George Pinckney—St. George, forsooth! Slayer of dragons! Why he'd faint at sight of an angle-worm. Better call him Saint Sissie Ann! And Uncle Ab Wilcox—he's got sorghum and saleratus to sell to the Roundheads! All in the Abolition band wagon, or trying to get in. How I despise them! There are some people not big enough to hate, like the primping, prinking Voey Bijawey—they hardly amount to enough to despise.

"But how could such a staunch gentleman as Bonnell Hogan ever so defile his soul? How could Hiram Goldbeck publish to the world his degradation? And of all men, of *all* men, Judge Gildersleeve, and Mrs. Gildersleeve, and Fred, and—would you believe it, poor Harold's fiancée—Marjorie! Have we Southerners no manhood or womanhood left? No principles; no courage?

"Have the Abolitionists backed down? Not one! Have they grown fewer by defection? No; they are multiplying like—like flies. Are they timid and apologetic? Brave as lions, every one of them. Look at John R. Noss! Look at Cornelius Blavey! Look at that old squint-eyed Israel Lef-fingwell! I hate their *principles*, but I admire *them*."

In her contemplation of heroism, and eulogy of brave men, her face had lost its malevolence; and the young lawyer remembered with a thrill Harold's tribute to his sister. "Ah,

yes," he thought, "she has a great soul—and how she could love a man!"

"Even Amsden Armentrout I respect. He's true, thorough, genuine. No backing down on his part, no squeamishness or namby-pambying! He'd stand by his guns till his last enemy or comrade was dead, then butt his way on to victory by his very mule-headedness.

"But *our* people—who has cunningly deceived them, hoodwinked them, made them afraid of their own shadows, blindfolded them and led them into the enemy's camp? Our editors, teachers, merchants, bankers, judges, and choicest young people—who has seduced them all?"

Vergie paused. The fires of wrath were flinging little javelins of flame from her eyes, and her breath was coming in short, excited gasps.

"Why don't you answer me, sir? Are you deaf? Who has posed in this community for months as Innocence Glorified, and yet by day and by night has been busy with his despicable work until the Culpeppers are left alone to suffer taunt and obloquy and threatened violence from whiskey-crazed mobs—*who?*"

The young lawyer, thoroughly mystified, could only answer, "I don't know."

"Liar!" she hissed. *You* are the arch-hypocrite! *You* are the villainous Cataline! *You* are the debased and depraved Judas Iscariot! It was of such as you the Irish poet was thinking when he said:

" 'Oh, for a tongue to curse the slave  
Whose *treason*, like a deadly blight,  
Steals o'er the councils of the brave,  
And blasts them in their hour of might! "

She had risen to her feet and stood before him as an accusing angel, beautiful yet terrible.

"Miss Culpepper," the young lawyer exclaimed, "you are beside yourself and accuse me most wrongfully. You cannot understand how you are thrusting not one dagger into my heart but a thousand. Last night upon my return to your home—it was almost midnight—and I saw you——"

"Don't mention last night, sir." She was now blushing furiously. "I was beside myself with—with gratitude. I then thought you the bravest, truest, noblest of men. I would have trusted my honor, my very life, to your keeping. As vestal virgins welcomed the Cæsars back to Rome, when they returned victorious, so deep down into the night I waited to welcome you, and to hear from your own lips the story of your prowess. With vestal like innocence I welcomed you to my room—when was maiden ever as trustful as I? Yes, joyfully welcomed you in my *lingerie de nuit*—a robe of silken filament, my falling tresses, and my innocence. And by my very trust in you, and in the same high, deep measure, now I *hate* you."

"But, Miss Culpepper, I vow, I swear, I am innocent of anything, of everything, you affirm."

"Don't, please! You're base enough already. Don't add perjury and blasphemy to hypocrisy. You deny everything—everything I allege?"

"Most emphatically!" the young lawyer replied.

"Then what do you say of this? What explanation do you offer?" She pointed to the Lincoln telegram.

"In deep sorrow on Harold's account, and wrath against those who had led him astray—but with only reverence for you—I came to your office an hour ago. You were out and I sat down to wait till you returned. Before me on the table lay this telegram, open and spread out, thus. I could not refrain from reading it without closing my eyes. A gust of wind blew it from the table to my lap. I said, 'It is meant for me, else it would not have come to my hands without



my bidding.' You have nothing to say, I see. There's nothing you can say. It is sufficient. My errand's done; I have the information for which I came." She started toward the door.

"But Miss Culpepper——"

"Don't detain me. I must return home to comfort my mother, and to tell Father just who and what you are. He'll be truly edified."

"And am I to see no more of you?" The young lawyer's voice was eloquent with pathos, throbbed with a world of yearning. Harold had said, "Everybody finally has to give in to Vergie," and, for the moment, the young lawyer was glad of it; and, for a fleeting instant, Vergie trembled under the spell of the yearning she herself had felt the night before—then mastered herself.

Then with that deep diapason voice, which all regnant spirits seem to possess, she said: "Felix Palfrey asked me the same question, Mr. Simonson, and I said, 'Never;' and there's no provision in heaven or earth for the reversal of that decree, for it is irreversible; and I now repeat it to you, but with that greater emphasis born of my loathing and detestation of the baser part you have played in our cruel drama."

The young lawyer knew that, despite his utter innocence, he was powerless to make any adequate defence, then knew that Vergie Culpepper was gone, though the echoes of her cruel and remorseless verdict even yet seemed to hover in the air; gone without a touch of hands, such as usually is vouchsafed even to the erring dead; with no word of farewell to remember; only flinging back, contemptuously, a look of mingled loathing and defiance that might well have awed the stoutest heart, yet startlingly beautiful and passionate—that dazzling, intoxicating beauty that appeals to the senses and renders men, in their mad endeavor to possess it, oblivious

to all the normal connections and conventions of life, men's approval or disapproval, earth's gain or loss, eternal weal or woe; and which, once won, exalts the possessor to what he deems a heaven of privilege; but once lost plunges him to irreparable ruin.

It came to him: *Vergie Culpepper was the Incarnation of the Old South*, famed in song and story; she *was* the Old South, brave, fearless, red-lipped, eagle-eyed, high-souled, passionate, imperious, glorious; to be feared because she was so willful and audacious, yet, in her gentler moods, worthy of all love, and, by the sheer force of her loveliness, compelling all homage and adoration—such a woman as Marc Antony would have loved, or Hannibal, or Charlemagne, or Cromwell, or Napoleon.

"Marjorie"—abruptly he turned to the window—was it telepathy? She was coming across the street to the offices occupied by himself and her father—had *her* thought of *him* hurried on ahead to apprise him of her coming? She paused a moment on the curbing, poised graceful as a bird, the sun shooting javelins of flame through her golden hair; the bracing October air imparting a heavenly glow to her face; sweetly, cheerily greeting the passers-by; turning back a moment to address a few heartfelt words of consolation to a young mother who had buried her first-born babe the day before; then lightly tripped across the street and up the stairs.

She wanted a book, or so she said—and it is never good form to dispute a lady's word, especially if she be young and beautiful.

"And oh, Mr. Simonson," as she searched among the unlikeliest shelves for the book she really *must* have, and with amazing leisureliness considering that she was in *such* a hurry, "what do you think? Vergie, our own beautiful Vergie, won't speak to me. I met her only a moment ago

down on the street and she actually spurned me. And the dear old Doctor had it out with Papa this morning. Yes, 'Quoth Horace' and all," with a grave smile in which there was no hint of wrath or malice—only deep pity and regret. "Yes, as soon as Papa went to the door—we were at breakfast and Dr. Culpepper sent word by Hepzibah that he'd 'be damned if he ever crossed the portals of The Maples again'—the Doctor furiously began by saying, 'Quoth Horace, \*Quanta funera moves Dardanæ genti?' whatever that may mean. Oh, if it hadn't been so terrible it would have been awfully funny. And it hurt Papa dreadfully, too, to be so cruelly and unjustly accused. But Papa—Oh, I never was as proud of him as I was this morning!—never for a moment forgot his—what do you call it?—'judicial poise,' " with a roguish glance and the slightest trill of comradly laughter. "And when the Doctor was all through, having accused Papa of almost every mean thing under the sun, Papa only bowed, oh, his courtliest bow, and said:

" 'Dr. Culpepper, for many years you and I have been friends. We are both Southerners—you a Kentuckian, I a Virginian. The day was when I would have killed you for what you have just said to me—yes, for very much less. And even now I refrain from doing so, not from lack of indignation, but from self-respect—so strong is the force of heredity and early training. For your early training and mine was feudal, mediæval, of an age that boasted serfs and slaves and retainers. Thank God, that era is passing and a new and nobler era is dawning, the era of *men*, unshackled and unhampered, and of *manhood*, unsullied and irreproachable. Indeed, we are living in a new dispensation.'

"And you know how tremendously impressive Papa is when he is deeply moved. Quoth Horace heard Papa

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\* What carnage art thou bringing on the Dardan nation?



through all right—guess he was afraid if he didn't Papa might forget all about the change of dispensations and *inadvertently* kill him, to the everlasting scandal of the—*new order*. But as soon as Papa was through the Horatian Doctor calmly inquired if he could see the rest of the family, 'just the fraction of a minute,' at the door.

"Evidently Papa was on his good behavior, so we were summoned, Mama and Fred from the dining room, and I from *behind a curtain*, an arm's length, 'as a crow flies,' though I made a circuit of three rooms and came in *behind* Mama and Fred, oh, so innocently and demurely.

"'Elizabeth'—that's Mama's name, you know—'do you approve of Edmund's course?' Oh, Mama was *Mrs.* Daniel come to judgment, sure enough! But Mama—you know what a dear she is—quietly replied, 'We Southern wives take wifehood seriously, Dr. Culpepper. Whatever Edmund does always meets with my hearty approval; but in this case especially so because I *know* he's right.'

"'Stand aside!' No, Dr. Culpepper didn't say it—he only *looked* it.

"Then it was Fred's turn, and you know what a cut-up he is. And Papa had to reprove him.

"Then it came my turn, and I was 'skeered.' You see he felt he had the right to deal with me as a member of the family," she continued, speaking evenly, though there was a vague remonstrance in her voice. "And what do you suppose I was guilty of? 'Blest if I know,' as Fred says, for I don't know anything about his old Horace—do *you*, Mr. Simonson? Besides it isn't fair to pitch into a girl when she doesn't know what you're talking about—what do you call it in law? 'An indictment in an unknown tongue?' Well, he put it squarely up to me, though I didn't understand a word of it; and neither did Mama or Fred, though I guess Papa did. I was afraid the folks would think I'd done

something awfully bad. Well, he said, 'Dic Lydia'—no, that isn't *all* he said. But, Mr. Simonson—and now her voice was full of laughter, and her eyes and dimples were bubbling over with innocent mirth, "who is 'Dic Lydia'? Is *he* a lady, or is *she* a man, or is *it* all one person?"

With all his troubles the young lawyer couldn't refrain from laughter.

"Please don't make fun of a poor little girl in distress!" she cried, with an excruciating grimace, and attempt at sober rebuke and entreaty.

"Well, no matter whether he's she, or she's he, or both are one and the same person, he went right on and boldly affirmed that 'Dic Lydia, per omnes deos, oro te, cur properas perdere Sybarin amando?' And who was Amando, which, I suppose, is the Latin for Amandy—was she Dic Lydia's wife, or Mr. Lydia's sister? Why don't you *tell* me, Mr. Simonson? Well, then he went on to say that I was 'perfusus liquidis odoribus'—does that mean that I refuse to take liquid baths, as he's always preaching everybody should? or that when I bathe I persist in putting a whole lot o' things like sulphur and asafoetida, an' *sich* like, in the water, thus making it odorous? And then he spoke of my 'flavam comam,' some old medical term, I guess. Anyhow I reckon every girl's got one, whatever it is; Oh, yes, and very emphatically he brought out 'religas,' and for the first time I understood him. So I said, 'Yes, a *Methodist*.' And you should have heard him '*snort*,' as Fred says. Guess it was because he's such a strong Episcopalian. Then he said that they had all regarded me as being 'aurea.' And proud that

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<sup>1</sup>Tell me, Lydia, by all the gods, I entreat thee, why dost thou hasten to ruin Sybaris by thy love?

<sup>2</sup>Bedewed with liquid perfume.

<sup>3</sup>Thy golden hair.

<sup>4</sup>Braid.

<sup>5</sup>All golden.

I was able to understand him again I bowed and replied, 'excellent,' for of course he was referring to my *hearing*. You know several of their kinfolks are as deaf as door-posts, and they've a terrible horror of anybody that's *deef*. And finally I got tired of it all and said, 'Dr. Culpepper, please don't say any more now. *The pancakes are getting cold, and we've got real pork sausage for breakfast this morning for the first time this fall, an' zee brik-fas' he ged—ah, ver' col', oui, oui!*' And Mama said, 'Why Marjorie!' And Papa said, 'What do you mean, you little hussy? I'll thrash you for that if it's the last act of my life.' And I said, 'Oui, oui, Fath-aire!' And then they all laughed. Then I told Dr. Culpepper that I thought just as Father thought, and Mama, and Fred, and—*Mr. Simonson*.

"Then Papa made, what do you call it? Oh, yes, the closing argument; and I tell you it was mighty solemn. It was all about liberty, and equality, and mercy, and standing by the Union, and broader interpretations of the Constitution, and some Amendments that ought to be made, and all that."

"In conclusion Papa said: 'Dr. Culpepper, we all sometimes say and do things which afterward we regret, and wish we could forget. Perhaps we can never undo or forget, but we can *forgive*. I'm sure you'll regret what you've said and done this morning, and I'm equally certain you'll never be able to forget it. Hence I wish to say to you now, for my own comfort quite as much as your's, that I bear you no ill feeling—it is all forgiven. I will now bid you good morning.' And with the grave courtesy of a gentleman of the old school Papa bowed, and we went back to breakfast, and Quoth Horace slowly wended his way back to town."

Marjorie, having concluded her narrative, sat gazing out at the window. There was a shower of golden leaves, for the wind had risen; but the October sun was shining bril-



liantly. The sky was very blue, with here and there a cloud of snowy whiteness. A cricket was chirping somewhere, and a couple of martins on the bough of a maple tree seemed to be farewelling. It was silent in the room, what someone has called the silence audible.

"Marjorie." The young lawyer's voice was strangely unnatural. It had been difficult for him to speak at all.

"Yes?" Her voice, too, was depressed. It had lost all the lilt, the *insouciance*, of the previous moment. To him she seemed afar off.

"Yes?" A second time she answered, and now turned her face toward him. The damask of her cheeks had paled to alabaster, but her eyes were supernaturally bright. Her lips were slightly drooping, whether from grief or pain he could not tell, and her body was rigid.

"You have come to tell me that though a certain act of mine cannot be undone or forgotten you are willing to *forgive*—oh, I cannot tell you how thankful I am."

"I forgive *you*?" she exclaimed. "No, 'tis I come to you begging forgiveness. I did you a grievous wrong. You were our guest; I followed you to the door; after you had said good-night I refused to dismiss you; I lingered; with my eyes I—Oh, I know what I did, and I——"

"You regret it, Marjorie?" His voice was tense. "You regret it?"

"Oh—only for your sake. D—do you regret it, Mr. S—Simonson?"

"Only for your sake, Miss Marjorie." He arose and started to her, but she was instantly on her feet. "Harold!" She was confused, but he understood her meaning and purpose. The warning was sufficient.

"We are mutually forgiven, Mr. Simonson, and I am *so* thankful. Now let everything remain just as it was when we first met."

"But are we no nearer to each other? Why this call, the drift of your conversation, the question you asked? Has there been no purpose in it all?"

"Does forgiveness mean nothing to you, dear boy? Has peace of mind no value? Is it not worth seeking, asking for?" Her voice was infinitely tender, and her face was very wistful. She continued:

"Yes, I had another 'purpose,' as you call it. I did not want what I—I did—that night to stand between you and *Vergie*, and so——"

"But, Miss Marjorie, how——"

"You know, Mr. Simonson, I belong to Harold, and——"

"Hear me, Miss Marjorie, just a minute! Is there not some——"

"Please, Mr. Simonson, you know how sacredly we Southern girls keep our vows. You wouldn't have me be untrue to mine."

He would have said more but speech failed him. He was silent, not from lack of feeling, but from excess of it. Besides, the strongest language hath no words at all—the eloquence of eyes and lips a-quiver when articulate speech is inadequate, or forbidden. It even creates an atmosphere and telepathically wings its message when all written and oral messages are gainsaid. Of all this Marjorie was intensely conscious; moreover there were emotions in her own heart that clamored for utterance—feelings that craved expression. She had to exercise self-control to the utmost to maintain her outward serenity.

"Mr. Simonson"—her voice was low and measured—"there can be no happiness in dishonor; you must go your way, and I, mine. You understand my meaning. God will help us and, with His help, we cannot fail. Never again will *Vergie* speak to me, not even after I have become her brother's wife—I know the proud, haughty, invincible spirit

that dominates that house; but I prove my love and loyalty to her by *bequeathing to her my dearest friend*. Vergie is wonderfully beautiful, accomplished, vital—all that men admire and desire. Once won, she will be loyal to you to the last. How fond she is of you I do not know, but I do know you will be a welcome suitor; and something tells me you will not be unsuccessful in your quest. And—I want you to be happy; indeed, though I hesitate to say it lest you disbelieve or misunderstand me, I am more prayerfully concerned for your happiness than I am for my own. Not that my happiness is assured, but—well, women can endure more suffering than men, have a greater capacity for pain. And—please do not regard this as cant, or the sentimentalism of the lachrymose maiden—I shall always pray for you; nor can you get beyond the loving care of Him to whom I shall daily and nightly bear petitions in your behalf; nor can aught of peril or disaster ever befall you but I shall be with you, possibly never in person, but *always* in sympathy, in loyalty of faith in you, in supplication to the Heavenly Father for you. If I have said too much, or been over-bold—forgive me! Now I must go. How sweet it has been to have this hour with you alone, in your and Papa's office, with everybody at court, and no one to disturb us. And do you know, dear boy, it was in this very room I first saw you, and heard the sound of your voice, and began to—to *like* you? Good-bye." She was now laughing gaily, though tears were in her eyes. "And," taking both of his hands in hers, "remember, I shall always be on *your* side!"

At the door she waved her hand and, like a radiant sunbeam, lingered a moment, then rapidly descended the steps to the street and disappeared, leaving behind a something that filled all the room—all that Vergie had suggested of passion, swift-winged, strong-limbed, imperious, yet with something spiritual, heavenly, eternal, added thereto.



As when the master-musician sweeps the lyre the silences laugh and clap their hands for joy, so all the deeps of the young lawyer's soul were thrilled to ecstasy at the magic of a name, a face, a voice. Marjorie—The New South; all passionate, yet all spiritual; all demanding, yet at the sign of the Cross all yielding; vestal in purity, yet raptured at thought of nuptial love; brave as fiercest lion in the jungle, yet gentle as lowliest lambkin in the sheepfold; on occasion solemn as a priestess, yet in lighter moods playful as a princess; when duty calls as stately as a goddess, naught of toil or care remitting, yet duty done again the winsome sweetheart, no dear delight of earth denying. Marjorie—such as she Sir Philip Sidney would have loved, and Sir Galahad, and Tancred the Crusader, and Dante the Tuscan poet, and Saul of Tarsus, who sang the most wondrous love-sonnet ever breathed by soul of man. Marjorie—The New South.

When Judge Gildersleeve came in from court a few minutes later, and saw the young lawyer, he exclaimed, "Why, Sammy, from the way you look you must have seen a ghost."

"No, Judge Gildersleeve, 'twas an *Angel!*" the young man replied.

The Judge gave the young lawyer a quick, keen, searching glance, then held his peace. He, too, had seen an Angel once, and remembered.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE YOUNG LAWYER LINCOLN'S GUEST AT WASHINGTON

O H, I will turn back, I must turn back to the girl  
I left behind me;  
Oh, that girl, that girl, that pretty little girl, the girl I left  
behind me."

This was the refrain of a popular song of the day, with a lilting, haunting air, that had become mentally and spiritually contagious.

Thousands of young men were leaving their homes for the perils and vicissitudes of war and it afforded them a vehicle for the expression of their emotions. Too, it fitted well the passion of patriotism and was at once an inspiration to battle nobly for the right, and a reminder of the loving hearts at home that were holding them in fond remembrance and eagerly waiting to grant them the fruition that war for a season had denied them. Moreover their fidelity to country gave validity to other vows; for if they were ready to die for their country, how much more readily would they lay down their lives for the wives and sweethearts whom they had left in the awed cities and quiet countrysides of the far-away North? And so every passing breeze, and even the night silences, seemed to throb with the passionate strain:

"That girl, that girl, that pretty little girl——"

The hurrying train would hardly emerge from its cadences at one station before it would encounter it again at the

next, for at every station the flower of its manhood were hurrying to the theater of war.

Of ardent patriotism there was no lack. Tears—ah, there were plenty of them; but they were not tears of entreaty or dissuasion. Venerable parents were cheerfully giving to the Government their sole stay and support; wives were proudly sending their husbands to fight for God, and Home, and Native-Land; sisters were wreathing their departing brothers with garlands, whether for victory or funeral they knew not, only proud that they were such brave and worthy men; and sweethearts with a heavenly love they no longer strove to conceal buckling sword and sabre with their own fair, soft hands, and bidding their trembling but unfearing lovers go and battle with the valor of heroes, and warning them not to return except with shields triumphant, or borne upon them. Mother, wife, sister, daughter, sweetheart—they were everywhere, giving the last kiss and embrace, the last loving admonition, the last little token of remembrance, usually a small pocket Testament with a handworked bookmark and, hid somewhere between the leaves, a lock of the giver's hair, waving the last loving farewell, and—

“Oh, that girl, that girl, that pretty little girl——”

On the train segregation and propinquity kindle enthusiasm to a yet higher strain. Now they're off to war, are soldiers indeed, and the most slovenly “stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk, he steps right onward, martial in his air, his form and movement.” Some are pale and thin—clerks, accountants, men used to indoor life—timid and shrinking they seem, but “give them great meals of beef, and iron and steel; they will eat like wolves, and fight like devils.” The talk is all of war, and they're already in the full swing and rhythm of easy and familiar comradeship. They've become members of a glorious brotherhood and



with a sort of swagger, both ludicrous and delightful, speak of "good old Abe," and "Little Mac the cracker-jack," and "Cock-eyed old Ben Butler," and what *they'll* do to "Jeff Davis and his blooming Confederacy."

So the talk runs on and on till at last the shifting scenes become strange, and the shadows of night shut them in. Their voices sink lower, and the conversation becomes less martial. A feeling of loneliness steals over them, memories of home and loved ones displace their former thoughts of siege and battle, a faint touch of homesickness deepens the gloom, and—

"Oh, that girl, that girl, that pretty little girl——"

Amid such bustle and confusion, blaring bands and strident songs of love and patriotic valor, the young lawyer journeyed to Washington. He felt reproached, condemned, desolate. To these valiant champions of the Union he was an alien. They seemed separate from him by the diameter of the Universe. He could understand them but they couldn't understand him. Of all the young soldiers not one spoke to him. Why should they? He was not their comrade; he had not put life and love and treasure on the altar as they had done. He felt himself barred from their high work and destiny—almost a man without a country. Their very language, many of the military terms, he did not understand. They related the military history of men, his own countrymen, down to dates and minute details, with which he was unfamiliar. He knew all about the Greek and Persian wars, the wars of Rome and Carthage, the conflicts of France and England, Russia and Germany; he could pass instant examination on their methods and leaders; but concerning this war, in his own country and between his own countrymen, he felt himself shamefully ignorant. He was a college man, lawyer, traveler, yet these young men from shop and store

and farm, some of them many years younger than himself, surpassed him in knowledge and enthusiasm. He thought how enviable their lot—sustained by a great purpose, engaged in a noble cause, and for each at home the love and prayers of the woman of his choice—while for him there was not a single pleasant reflection: a childhood sordid and depressing, a young manhood of incessant toil and privation, and, finally, of the two women for whom he cared and might have learned to love, one hated him, and the other placed an impassable barrier between them. But it is always darkest just before the dawn.

When the young lawyer the following day reached Washington he found it a vast military camp, soldiers, soldiers everywhere, soldiers afoot, soldiers mounted, sailors armed and uniformed *cap-a-pie*. The flag he had so rarely seen at New Richmond was always in sight, while martial music added to the pomp and blazonry of war. Almost in sight and sound were two mighty armies: McClellan 168,318 strong, Johnston 150,000, and a battle was daily expected. Indeed, the President was entreating McClellan to attack Johnston at once and try conclusions with him.

As soon as possible the young lawyer secured an audience with the President. It was at the White House after the offices were closed for the day.

"Well, Sammy," the President said cheerily, "I see you're not yet lost, strayed, or stolen."

"No, Mr. President," replied the young lawyer, returning the President's greeting. "Had I strayed or been lost the good people of Southern Illinois would have duly returned me to my place of abode; and as for being stolen—well, you know I am not a President or Prince-Royal, and so I stand in no peril of abduction."

The President chuckled softly and replied, "Yes, Sammy, every position has its drawbacks, even mine; and some folks

think my friends down South would like to abduct me, and add me to their menagerie," referring to the epithet "Gorilla" that was being applied to him by many Southern newspapers.

It pleased the young lawyer to note that not even the recalcitration of McClellan, the bickerings of the politicians, or the jealousies of Chase and Seward had robbed Mr. Lincoln of his cheerful serenity, or his abounding good humor.

Mr. Lincoln made inquiry regarding many of his old-time friends: Fithian, and Linder, and Eden, and Marshall, and Casey, and Tanner, and Pollock, and others, some of them his political opponents, but with whom he had practiced law; pausing occasionally to tell a funny story or relate a humorous incident, often at his own expense; his dark, yellow, wrinkled face lighting up, his small dark-blue eyes dancing with merriment, and his voice, naturally shrill and piping, becoming mellow and musical with good humor.

"And now, Sammy, tell me about New Richmond. *Depend!* I think almost as often of New Richmond as I do of that other Richmond," nodding toward Richmond, Virginia, "and I guess one's about as *secesh* as the other," all in the best of humor.

The young lawyer then told of the favor with which Felix Palfrey had been received and entertained, the boomerang against the Southern Confederacy his machinations had proved, and the final turn of the tide of sentiment toward Mr. Lincoln and the Union Cause, all of which greatly interested the War-President.

"The people of Southern Illinois," said the President, "are most amiable and lovable and their very weaknesses, though sometimes exceedingly amusing, often possess an infinite charm. A man like Felix Palfrey would especially appeal to them: a certain foreign distinction, charming Southern



manners, an accomplished musician, ability to converse fluently in several languages, familiarity with the best literature, an air of helplessness and confidingness appealing both to their charitable judgment and chivalry, themselves always desiring to appear well and with an abnormal fear of exposing their own more or less meager attainments, you can see how easily and instantly they would yield to his lure; but once they discover that they have been duped and made the butt of ridicule, pride and self-esteem fill their cup of indignation full to overflowing, and their rage and demands for redress become boundless. I'll tell you, Sammy, it was a good thing 'zee leetl' moon-key' got away as soon and safely as he did; if they'd got hold of him after his true character was discovered more than likely they'd have fed him to 'zee—ah, me-nag-e-rie!'” He was especially amused at what must have been the wrath of his dear old friend, true and tried, Amsden Armentrout.

The turn of the tide of public sentiment in New Richmond toward the Union greatly cheered the President, though the influence of such men as Voe Bijaw and Tutwiler and Singleton he allowed wouldn't amount to much either way. “However,” he added philosophically, “it is better to have the good will of a dog than his ill will.”

He reckoned Hiram Goldbeck a good man, “but Sammy,” he added, “riches, except there be some great alterative, make men invertibrates, coarse and hard, and demoralizing and, not infrequently, become, even in death, the ruling passion. I used to marvel at the Saviour's teachings regarding riches and rich men, but I don't any more since, as President, I have become acquainted with Wall Street.”

He paused a moment, then added, “Moses did a great day's work when he smashed the golden calf; but it's a bigger job now, Sammy, for it's not a calf any more, but full grown, and a 'Bull,' too! And we've got some 'Bears.’

"But Goldbeck's face-about indicates that he's convinced that we're going to win out, and that's some comfort anyhow.

"But the conversion of such men as Judge Gildersleeve is of immense advantage to the Union," Mr. Lincoln continued. "It will enable me to save the Border States; it will help brainy, conscientious men, now honestly halting between two opinions, to come to a correct conclusion; it will make the work of Felix Palfreys henceforth impossible in Raleigh County, maybe throughout Southern Illinois. Judge Gildersleeve is a Virginian and so am I, ancestrally and by choice; he is a gentleman of the Old School, than which there is nothing finer; he is a lawyer of the profoundest learning and of the highest character; and his espousal of the Union will greatly aid our cause.

"And my dear old friend, Fairfax Culpepper, true a gentleman and big a rebel as ever lived, sort of second Bob Toombs, though a better and brainier man," and he clasped and unclasped his hands and cracked his knuckles, a habit he had, a long while, apparently staring into vacancy. The young lawyer wondered what the great man was thinking about.

"To me such men as Dr. Culpepper," he presently resumed, are an anomaly. Rash, yet a perfect gentleman; swears like a pirate, yet is the soul of devotion; loves the Flag, yet spurns all that it stands for; from his point of view a conscientious patriot, but from every other viewpoint a defiant and uncompromising traitor; would send us all to perdition if he could, then pray the rest of his life for the Lord to deliver us; denies 'the nigger a soul, by gad, suh,' yet would divide his last crumb and penny with a negro in distress. But I can't understand why, Sammy, if the South is so much better than the North, as he avers, he doesn't go there; and why he is so angry at me, though I have not in any way disturbed his person or property, yet is boundlessly pleased

when Mr. Davis sanctions expatriating all Union citizens in the South, and appropriating their land, homes, money, everything they have—an act of the Confederate Congress which Mr. Benjamin is enforcing with a persistence and ingenuity little short of fiendish, a crusade of confiscation and spoliation of the property and possessions of innocent people unequaled by that of any other civilized people in the history of the world.

“Nevertheless I deplore the disposition to mob Dr. Culpepper. He’s a good man, only mistaken; and it would greatly grieve me were harm to come to him or to his family.”

“And, Mr. President,” the young lawyer observed, “the peril is all the greater now that The Elms has one less defender—you know, Harold has broken away from his father’s teachings and influence and joined the Union army.”

“The Almighty be praised for that!” exclaimed Mr. Lincoln; then on second thought suddenly sobering, he said, “No, Sammy, I take it all back. As President I’m glad, but as a father I feel only pity. It is the history of Absalom over again, only, in this case, I think the son has chosen the better part. But what should I do, what would become of me, if my son Robert were to desert *me*, and join the army of mine, and my country’s, *enemy*? It would break my heart.”

Mr. Lincoln was deeply distressed. He arose and walked across to a window. A troop of soldiers suddenly appeared, then marched on to the shrill music of fife and drum. The President recognized their salute and returned it. In the distance there was the sound of cannonry at target practice, or greeting some high official. Tad, his little son, came in and asked his father to sharpen his pencil. The great ruler of a mighty people took from his pocket a common jack-knife and performed the humble service as graciously as he would have officiated at a state occasion, and as carefully as



he would have prepared a Proclamation, or a message to Congress. He took the little fellow in his arms, kissed and caressed him, then sent him back to his mother.

Seating himself at the table, he said: "Sammy, I hate war—as Cicero and Marcus Aurelius and Plutarch hated it, so, with every drop of my Quaker blood, do I abhor it. It violates solemn treaties, abrogates sane and wholesome laws, arouses the basest passions, as it is always the offspring of the basest of all passions, namely, selfishness; it preys upon the innocent, debauches virtue, robs the helpless, is merciless and in every way detestable. My heart warms to our Saviour when I remember that He was the Prince of Peace. I hail John Bright as a brother beloved, not merely because he hates Slavery and takes our side in this controversy, but, supremely, because he is a champion of peace. Sometimes Sumner is hard to get along with, but then I think how immovably he stands for peace, and I love him just the same.

"Look at this terrible war—father against son, brother arrayed against brother. Take the case of the Culpeppers. What a tragedy it is to the frail mother; her son at war against the government of which her cousin, whose loving esteem she naturally prizes, is the head! And the Doctor never will forgive his son, and should Harold be killed what a torment the Doctor's whole subsequent life will be! And what a catastrophe to the sister! And the family at outs with the Gildersleeves and Goldbecks and Leverings and Pinckneys—the people with whom they have culture and tastes and delights in common. Only Frothingay, whom they detest, and Boynton, a competitor, left."

There was an infinite pathos in the President's voice. The secret of his hold on men now was patent: to sincerity he added a passionate love for humanity, and to strength a

tenderness most winsome; withal, there was a noble impersonality, self-forgetfulness, in all his thoughts and feelings. Not for himself he grieved; not for himself was he planning for the future; not for himself was he bearing the burdens of his great office, and enduring the bitter taunts and fierce hatred of millions of his countrymen; not for himself was he bearing the cruel and crushing cross of crucifixion to Golgotha—it was all, and always, for others.

*“Others he saved; himself he could not save.”*

Simonson, looking into the seamed and homely face, face of deeply-wrinkled yellow parchment, face on which countless heart-breaks had left their cruel and relentless autographs and affidavits, and listening to the solemn voice, now high and shrill, now low and soft as note of thrush at twilight, but always careworn and pathetic, read anew and with clearer vision the lesson that every birth, whether of principle or babe or nation, is always a tragedy; that the reformer of necessity is a martyr; that it were better that a thousand constitutions, however hoary and venerable, and however numerous signed by venerable and illustrious men, should be violated, even annihilated, than that progress should be stayed, or one act of inhumanity committed; that no body of men—theologians, physicians, statesmen—however wise, is infallible; that no man or body of men, however prescient, can foresee and provide for unborn contingencies and exigencies; that constitutions are made for men, not men for constitutions; and that as Jesus strove, even unto death, for a larger life and a more perfect liberty so, for this self-same purpose, and perhaps as providentially, this mysterious man of low degree and of lowly parentage was come, and perhaps at last, like his divine prototype, would give his life as a supreme token of his love, and pledge of his devotion.

*"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."*

"And now, Sammy, my boy," the great War-President was saying, "you must help me. Your work is cut out for you. Can I count on you? You see I have been waiting for you to *ripen*."

"Yes, sir, Mr. President," replied the young lawyer with a great uplift of soul, as the young priest, rid of the least and last remains of doubt, and certain that he is dead to the world, stands before the great high altar to take the final vows. "Before you had spoken I had already made up my mind to enlist tomorrow morning."

"For service in the army, Sammy?"

"Certainly, Mr. President! Where else could I serve?"

"As well in the army, Sammy, as any soldier-boy I've got, but better elsewhere."

"But where, Mr. President?" Like every man who at last has come to a decision, whether by sudden inspiration or after a long and fierce intellectual struggle, he wanted to act at once, to do some great and notable thing that would proclaim to the world his new alliance and allegiance. To have his high resolve to act promptly and decisively questioned awakened in him a vague disappointment, almost antagonism.

"Where else and how other than by fighting in the army could I help you and serve my country, Mr. President?"

The President noticed a slight change in the color and accent of the young lawyer's voice and was quick to read the cause.

Very gently: "At home, Sammy—in New Richmond."

"But what can I do there?" Then with a sudden accession of feeling, "There's nothing for me to do in New Richmond."



"You're mistaken, Sammy. Excuse me if I contradict you." The President spoke humbly as a child and the young lawyer was abashed.

"Forgive *me*, Mr. President. Humbly I crave *your* pardon. Open my eyes that I may see the work there is for me to do in New Richmond. Tell me what you want me to do, and teach me the way to do it."

"I did not mean to rebuke you, Sammy," the President gravely replied, "but I think I understand the situation better than you, better than any member of my Cabinet, or all of them together," the latter part as if to himself.

The young lawyer bowed his head, glad that the President's tone and manner were kindly and void of sarcasm.

"Sammy," he continued, "if we can hold the Border States there can be no question as to the final outcome of the war; should we lose them the result would be in doubt, and it *might* be fatal to us. This then must be my first concern: to hold the Border States, and prevent them from aligning themselves with the Southern Confederacy. This, we may say, is the key to the whole situation.

"Next to that I am concerned for my own state—Illinois. I confess there is somewhat of sentiment in this, but a sentimentality that, I trust, is pardonable. I naturally crave the approval of my friends and neighbors, and while the loss of Illinois would not necessarily be fatal, it would be a great personal grief and humiliation to me, and a serious blow to the cause for which we are contending.

"A glance at the map will instantly reveal to you the strategic position of Illinois, with Missouri to the west and Kentucky to the south. Unfortunately we are weakest in Illinois where we need to be the strongest; the same is true of Indiana and Ohio. Northern Illinois is strong, while Southern Illinois, where we have everything to contend

with, is weak. In other words, Missouri, Kentucky and Southern Illinois, though separate entities, territorially, are one socially and politically. Hence, if we can keep Southern Illinois in line, Missouri and Kentucky, with their two great border cities, St. Louis and Louisville, will find it difficult to break away and wander off after strange gods.

"Hence, both politically and sentimentally there are strong reasons why we must not permit men, like Dr. Culpepper, to gain the upper hand in Southern Illinois.

"Another thing: in less than a year we shall have another Congressional election; and our enemies will do their utmost to wrest Congress from us. Of course they can't do it; but if, in the 38th Congress, our majority should be cut down the result might be lamentable. Now if brave, loyal, capable Democrats, of the Logan, McClernand, and Robinson stamp, could be elected from the Southern Illinois districts it would not matter so much; but that, I fear, is impossible. However, if we put up good and capable men, and keep men like Culpepper well in hand, we may *put our political adversaries on their good behavior.*"

The young lawyer had listened to the President's outline of the political situation and perils in Southern Illinois with intensest interest and a gradual apprehension of the work the President desired him to do, but was certain he lacked every essential qualification. Besides, he wanted to get away from New Richmond. Even bloody Mars would be a relief after the discomfiture inflicted on him by relentless Venus. To face the scorn of Vergie Culpepper and the imperviousness of Marjorie Gildersleeve were, to his mind just then, ordeals too great for him to endure.

"Mr. President," the young lawyer replied, "I think I understand what you want me to do."

"Maybe you're mistaken, Sammy, as the girl said to her

over-confident beau who had prematurely popped the question."

"And I am certain," the young lawyer persisted, feeling now that he must be resolute, "I do not possess the necessary qualifications."

"Sammy," the President broke in with a gleam of humor in his kindly face, "is it a *gal* that's the reason you don't want to go back?"

The drawl and the dialect were inimitable and the young lawyer could not resist the spell. But, suddenly sobering, the President added, "Don't be offended, Sammy. The love of a noble young man for a pure sweet young woman is the holiest thing in the world. Such an experience was mine once and it was like heaven to my poor heart—but *she died*."

Mr. Lincoln's profound emotion, evidenced in both speech and manner, gripped the young man's heart, and he wondered if the President's memory had suddenly brought back to him the face and form of Ann Rutledge, whose sudden death at Old Salem had almost wrecked his life.

"There are many ways, Sammy, of serving one's country. While our brave boys are facing death on the battlefield some of us must hold things down and together at home, and keep track of the enemies in the rear; and this home work requires the greatest skill and patience. Daniel Boone could have beaten Cicero all hollow on a coon hunt; but when it came to hunting down and bringing to book bold and unscrupulous conspirators, like Cataline, there was no man quite the equal of Cicero. It would have been folly for Cicero to have gone down to Etruria and Picenum—*his* place was in *Rome*, just as *your* place, for the present at least, is in *New Richmond*."

"But, Mr. President, I'm neither orator or politician," the young lawyer persisted, now more vehemently, feeling that he was being cornered, "and, like yourself, Cicero was both.



Don't you see how incapable I am for the work you want done in Southern Illinois?"

"Sammy," with a low chuckle, "I don't want you to *spout*, nor do I want you to *wallow in the loblolly* of politics—I just want you to lie low and keep your weather-eye open and your mainsail-ear spread to the breeze. Keep track of things for me. Some folks will bear watching. If we're not careful they'll do us *dirt*. I'll furnish you a partial list of them and you can complete it. No, Culpepper is not to be feared. He's open and honorable and above board. It's the sneaks like Voe Bijaw we've got to look out for. Read the papers, mingle freely in society, and *entertain a very poor opinion of me* in your conversation so that no one will think we're working in *cahoots*. There are a few places, sort of plague spots, that will especially bear watching. One is near Thyratira, just over in Ephrata County. Another is Patmos, in Vision County. Another is Rapidan, the county seat of Rapid Anne County—and of course there are several others. Once in a while you could run over to Thyratira, or Patmos, or Rapidan, or any other place that's just *spi-lin'* for attention, on *legal* business, of course, and I'll look after the necessary *spondulix*."

"Mr. President," exclaimed Simonson. "I cannot permit you to continue longer, laboring under the erroneous assumption which my silence may have justified, that I am going to undertake this commission. Why, even now, I fear I'm liable to be arrested for obtaining goods under false pretences. But, once for all, I'm *not* going back to New Richmond, and I *am* going to enlist tomorrow morning in McClellan's army."

"And so, Sammy," smiling quizzically, "your mind's made up, is it? All right!" There was a moment's silence, then Mr. Lincoln added: "Sammy, I'm disappointed, sorely dis-

appointed, but," placing his hands on the young lawyer's shoulders, as a father might lovingly confront a son beloved, "I respect and honor your conscientious convictions. In some matters there can be no human intervention—*Jacob had to have it out alone with God.*"

A few minutes later, as the young lawyer, having said good-night, was leaving, Mr. Lincoln called him back and said:

"By the way, Sammy, let me see you in the morning before you enlist. I think *maybe* I can direct you to your advantage, even though Seward and Greeley seem to think I'm a *greenhorn*. But, Sammy, *I'm cutting my eye teeth* mighty fast in this office."

The following morning when Simonson had told Mr. Lincoln he had changed his mind, and that he was eager to get back to New Richmond with his "weather-eye open, and his main-sail ear spread," the President laughed boisterously and said: "Been ripenin', Sammy? Been ripenin'? I thought you'd be ripe by morning, and you're no Jonah's gourd either. I doggie, Sammy, this does me good. If I felt any better my Adams apple would exude so much cider *I'd drown in apple-jack!* Of all men, you're supremely qualified, Sammy, to do just the work that's needed in Southern Illinois. Quiet, brave, diplomatic, educated, a lawyer, thoroughly acquainted with the people and situation—there's none other that's so perfectly fitted and equipped, least of all myself, to grapple with the Egyptian plots and machinations against us. Any man can pull a trigger, and advance or retreat, as per order of commanding officer—be a fighting *machine*—but to take the initiative, to match cunning with yet greater cunning, blind, hot-headed rashness with clear-eyed, cool-headed, carefully reasoned-out, purposeful heroism, with a definite object in view, re-

quires *brains*, Sammy, and you've got 'em, *heaps* of 'em. Blessings on you, my boy! You've taken a great burden off my heart. With you in command in Southern Illinois, I shall rest easy, so far as that locality is concerned. I only wish everything was as satisfactory over there," looking away toward McClellan's command. "Again, blessings on you, Sammy; and let me hear from time to time—how the *menagerie's* performing!"



## CHAPTER XV

### THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM—VERGIE CULPEPPER AGAIN

WHEN the young lawyer returned to New Richmond he found everything surprisingly quiet. The bellicose passions of early October seemingly had entirely subsided. Amsden Armentrout, recovered from the blow he had received, was pounding iron as usual. Abner Wilcox was vending sorghum and calico, rock candy and spike nails, with equal grimness and passivity, while Hiram Goldbeck was as eager as ever in pursuit of the almighty dollar.

Lige Ferris, a horse trader, was in town; but as he had cheated everybody out of his eye teeth nobody would look at his horses. A strolling band of gipsies drove through without imperiling their souls by the acquisition of that "dross," the inordinate love of which is said to be the root of all evil; the only notice taken of them was by the canine population. A murder trial was on at the court house, but as it had been brought on a change of venue from Sardis it excited but little local interest. In fact the streets were practically deserted, as the children were in school and the farmers were busy gathering corn, "butchering," and hauling and working-up the winter firewood.

Apparently nothing was the matter with the world, and nothing out of the ordinary ever had occurred at New Richmond; least of all would it have been conceivable to an outsider that behind the placid faces and kindly greetings of the citizens there were slumbering passions that could be awakened, easily and instantly, to a most extraordinary turbulence

and fury—that indeed presently would be kindled to such a height of hatred and ferocity as would result in a climax of murderous violence on the one hand, and of dauntless defiance on the other, unsurpassed even in the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles.

Several events had contributed to the present tranquillity. Dr. Culpepper's assault on Amsden Armentrout had profoundly shocked the entire community—and none deplored it more, after the storm of his passion had subsided, than the Doctor himself; and he and his fellow Southerners realized that the time had come when moderation and mutual concession were indispensable.

Thus for a week Dr. Culpepper and his compatriots had vied with the "Yankee Abolitionists" in expressions of sympathy and kindly offers of assistance; and when the rugged but pale blacksmith once more appeared on the street none greeted him with greater or sincerer cordiality than those who were the most diametrically opposed to him politically.

The mob-spirit, too, which twice had manifested itself on successive evenings, had had a sobering effect. Whether Roundhead or Cavalier, the Anglo-Saxon cannot abide the mob; and on two occasions gruesome, murderous Anarchy had lifted its hideous head, and openly defied the authorities, in New Richmond; and citizens, regardless of previous differences of opinion, anxiously inquired: "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

But the quietness of the community and abstention from rancorous political discussion possibly were mainly due to the sympathy felt for Dr. Culpepper and his family on account of Harold's abrupt severance of all home ties. That he had espoused the Union was only a surprise; but to have left home as he had done was profoundly shocking. Even the staunchest Loyalists could not approve of the manner of his going, nor refuse the meed of sympathy to the

stricken family. The Doctor suddenly had aged, Vergie refused to be seen, and the reports concerning Mrs. Culpepper's grief and declining health were such as to awaken the liveliest commiseration. Whatever dislike Dr. Culpepper's previous words and actions had aroused now was forgotten in the presence of his great domestic affliction. The leading Loyalists, such as Noss and Blavey, exhibited a specially fine spirit, assuring the Doctor that elation on account of what the Union cause had gained by the enlistment of his son was as nothing compared with the regret and sorrow they felt over the loss he had sustained. To all such expressions of sympathy the Doctor listened gravely and respectfully, and returned thanks in a manner and spirit that left nothing to be desired.

Thus for a season everything moved along quietly and uneventfully. But little was heard regarding war or politics, though of course there were flying rumors and casual remarks. It was generally understood that the President and McClellan were at outs, but if concern was felt, one way or the other, no one said so. Banks and Butler, one a politician and the other a lawyer, were fighting somewhere—but no one seemed sufficiently interested to inquire whether successfully or unsuccessfully. The little affair at Hatteras Inlet the last of August was, to all appearances, a thing of the past and utterly unrelated to the present. On the Seventh of November, Port Royal, midway between Charleston and Savannah, again uncovered before "Old Glory;" as did also, on the same day, Belmont, Missouri—but there was no commotion in New Richmond. The 37th Congress met in December but New Richmond, though reading the proceedings day by day, made few comments. The Battle of Ball's Bluff was fought and lost by the Union forces, the gallant General E. D. Baker of the Union army being among the



killed ; but sorrowing and rejoicing alike were done in silence or in secret.

Naturally such a state of affairs was not conducive to social intercourse. Social life is at its best only when conversation is unrestrained, confidence is conscious of no impediment, and good-will is joyful and boundless. All these conditions now were lacking in New Richmond except among a very few in two or three unrelated and sharply differentiated circles.

The Culpeppers were practically self-ostracised. They couldn't endure distrust, or to be pitied or patronized ; least of all could they assume to be in sympathy with their Union neighbors when they were not, or refrain from expressing their desire for the ultimate triumph of the Southern Confederacy. But their virile and tenacious courage caused them to scorn, with an antipathy that knew no bounds, their former friends who, though still claiming to be Jeffersonian Democrats, were now aligned with the Lincoln administration. To none of these—the Gildersleeves, Pinckneys, Goldbecks—had a Culpepper spoken since their defection from the Southern cause. For Unionists, as unbending and uncompromising as themselves—the Nosses, Blaveys, and Armentrout—they entertained a boundless respect, but, naturally, it was void of warmth or sympathy—such as stern warriors feel for other warriors equally stern, and whom they know to be worthy of their steel.

Among War Democrats there were two classes : the fit and the non-fit. In the first class the Gildersleeves were pre-eminent ; and with them were associated a very few, such as the Goldbecks and Pinckneys.

In the non-fit group were such as the Bijaws, Gordons, Singletons, and Tutwilers.

Among Loyalists there was but little intercourse. For the most part they were too much concerned with secular

duties, and too much absorbed by patriotic ardor and anxiety, to give much attention to social diversion—not unlike Cromwell, and the early New England Puritans.

There was yet the Fourth Estate, uneducated, unused to the refinements and amenities of cultured society, caring nothing for literature, with whom life continued about as usual. They met freely at their corn-huskings, house-raising, quilting-bees, apple-cuttings, rustic dances, singing schools, spelling matches, debating societies, and kissing parties. They spoke their minds without reserve and, if their opinions were seriously called in question, proved them by the muscular method.

To none of these circles did the young lawyer belong. He was a newcomer, and, therefore, could not expect to be regarded as a member of the old order. Owing to Judge Gildersleeve's hospitality he had been "recognized" but not yet adopted. But for the unhappy state of affairs occasioned by the war in due time, doubtless, he would have become a member of the Culpepper-Gildersleeve-Goldbeck circle which represented the dominant element in the community; but now that circle was disrupted.

With the Noss-Blavey group he had much in common but was not sufficiently radical to suit them, though he was too radical for such as the Goldbecks and Wilcoxes.

As to the Fourth Estate he was too "high-browed" to be agreeable; and for the opposite reason they did not appeal to him. He acknowledged their many excellent qualities and admired their sterling integrity, but found their intellectual life and sympathies narrow and restricted.

But for his hopeless passion for Marjorie Gildersleeve he would have found delight in the circle at The Maples. That he was welcome there he had every reason to believe. The Judge was like a father to him, and his wife declared that Fred and Sammy were the two finest boys in the world.

Even Marjorie, though a trifle shy and reserved when in his presence, always showed her pleasure when he came to The Maples, and often mildly chided him because he was not a more frequent visitor. After their interview at her father's office, the day she called, she had never mentioned Harold Culpepper's name, just why he could not surmise, unless it was because she wished to spare his feelings. He wondered if they corresponded, but supposed they did—he also wondered if Harold still kept up his correspondence with the grass-widow. However, they but rarely met, and on such occasions their conversation, of necessity, was always on trite and irrelevant subjects.

Thus left more and more alone he consoled himself, when not engaged, by long rambles in the woods. Always fond of Nature in all her myriad moods he now found communion with her a great source of comfort and inspiration. Bird and animal life were to him clothed with infinite charm.

Speeding on horseback along the north roads, or indulging in tramps over the hills now hung with the pink and purple and hazy-blue tapestries of autumn, and down through the quiet dales, now strangely quiet and peaceful, the young lawyer felt his pulses quicken and the world take on a brighter hue.

It was the simple life he saw about him—no war, or mixed motives, or cross purposes; no passions, save those of love, and good will, and unrestrained fellowship; no ambitions save such as are calm and sane and wholesome. It was sweet to be living, the young lawyer felt; to be at peace with the world; to be rid of all passions and ambitions; to be at-one with Nature. The bright green moss, the golden and scarlet ensign of the trees, the mellow beams of the sun now tilting toward the southern horizon, the low soft gurgle of the brook, the gentle maternal call, both com-



mand and caress, of bird and beast, and the gladsome dutiful filial answer, followed by the velvety sigh of domestic peace and satisfaction—ah, yes, it was good to be alive and living thus away from the strife and turmoil of the world, free from the feverish and maddening passions and ambitions of men. *Washington?* To the young lawyer it seemed to be in another world. *Lincoln?* He had become as one of the Homeric gods. The *War?* It had become as remote as Milton's commotion in heaven.

"Ah, yes," he was thinking one day as he strolled along over a floor of soft earth, deeply carpeted with moss, "why not here in a peaceful valley among the hills an humble cottage, a few shelves of books tried and true, a cat and dog for company, bird-carols for music, the notes of thrush and whippoorwill for matins and vespers, the cricket to drone the slumber song, the breath of dawn to sweep back the invisible and intangible curtain of slumber and reveal the splendors of the new-born day, a——"

"Oh—oh——"

Involuntarily Simonson stopped and listened. It was a human voice, the voice of a woman in distress, but he was not quite able to locate it.

Again it came, now louder and more insistent. In it, too, there was a tone of vexation almost akin to tears.

"Oh—oh——" Then, after a pause, "Oh—oh—I can't loose myself! What shall I do-o?" The voice trailed off into something like a sob.

Simonson now was able to locate the direction whence came the cry of distress and hastened thither. In a few moments he came upon—*Vergie Culpepper*.

She was standing under a low thorn-tree with her hair entangled in the branches. Evidently she had been examining the strange tree, passing under the low boughs with jaunty riding hat in hand, when a tress of her hair had be-

come entangled on one of the thorn-covered limbs. Trying to extricate herself she had become only more hopelessly entangled until her bondage was complete. Try as she would she could not get away. Compelled to stoop because the branches were low; unable to move in any direction without intensest pain; her gown torn and her hair, free from its accustomed fetters, disheveled; far from any farm house and with no human being, for aught she knew, nearer than New Richmond, her situation was, indeed, pitiable, and, without help, it might become alarming.

The young lawyer took in the situation at a glance. He knew she hated him—but no matter now. More than likely she would rather die than that he should touch her—then he must rescue her perforce. In such an exigency he must meet scorn with boundless good humor, and fiery speech with good natured quip and jest. If he was glad to see her, to meet her again, that he was now able to render her a service, that serving her he must touch her hair, maybe her hands, look into the depths of her wonderful eyes, and listen to the voice that had in it, even when attuned to the staccatos and syncopations of wrath, such extraordinary cadences—what wonder?

Hearing his approaching footsteps she exclaimed, "Oh, I'm so thankful," not able to turn her head and see her coming deliverer. "Whoever you may be if you will but loose me and let me go I shall never be able to thank you enough; besides I'm Dr. Culpepper's daughter and Papa, I'm sure, will abundantly reward you."

"Upon my soul, Beauty in distress!" he exclaimed aloud, seeing that she was in no immediate danger, and not willing yet to face her dauntless spirit. Possibly, too, he had a bit of Petruchio's jocund philosophy.

"Oh, sir, do not taunt me, but rescue me! Don't you see my pitiable plight?"

"Indeed, I do," he replied. "Most interesting. Sort of tableau. Reminds me, yes, I have it—Absalom!"

"Oh," with a voice now rent between grief and pain and rage, "now I recognize you by your voice. *Brute*, to taunt a helpless woman in distress! *Devil*, to remind her in such a moment of the greatest sorrow of her life! *Coward*, to apply an insulting epithet to my brother when he is not here to resent it!"

"Forgive me, Miss Culpepper," now thoroughly ashamed of himself. "Your rebuke is just, though I did not mean it the way you took it."

He was now advancing to release her, but she would have none of his assistance.

"Leave me!" she almost hissed. "I would rather perish than be beholden to you for anything."

Unheeding her vitriolic speech and temper he bent low, beginning the work of extrication when, for a moment forgetting her physical torment, she smote him in the face. Still undeterred he grasped the offending hand and held it while, with his other hand, he endeavored to loose the tresses nearest him. Provoked beyond endurance by his cool determination, as his face unconsciously was lowered on a level with her own, she spat in it and, with a vigorous kick, sent him sprawling on the ground.

Despite her torture, now augmented by her exertion, she broke out into a taunting ripple of laughter. The young lawyer looked at her, amazed at her peerless beauty and dauntless spirit. He was not angry—he had given her occasion for wrath. But he was nonplused. Would it be right to tie her hands till he could extricate her? It seemed the only way. He surveyed the tree, trying to hit on some feasible plan.

"Beautiful tree, isn't it?" Her voice now was soft and purring but surcharged with subtle mockery. "You're a



Boston man, I believe; perhaps you can tell me about it." Her manner was as unconcerned as that of an indolent tourist, but there was a dash of blood on one cheek, and her face was haggard with pain. Her spirit, however, was untamed, defiant. His soul revolted against seeing her suffer, and his heart was touched to pity, but what could he do with such a willful girl? Again he looked at her. She still was smiling at him with infinite *sang-froid*, and her beautiful white teeth gleamed with mockery.

"Oh, well," now aroused to wrath, "since you are so much interested in botany and forestry I will answer you." Leisurely pursing his lips and examining a low branch with its now faded leaves and an occasional withered blossom he said: "Uh-m, Rhamnaceæ, I believe. Loosely-veined leaves, four or five petals with short claws, stamens short, black berry-like fruit with cartilaginous seed-like nutlets, cotyledons foliaceous. Uh-m! yes—*bitterish* properties," looking at her meaningly, "alternate leaves and small flowers, stamens of the number of the valvate sepals and alternate with them, inserted on a disc which lines the calyx-tube and often unites it with the base of the ovary, this having a single erect ovule in each of the from two to five cells. Yes, this is of the buckthorn family and——"

"O Mr. Simonson, call me any name you are a-mind, but please loose me! I believe I'm going to f-faint." Her voice had almost sunk to a whisper, and her face was very white.

Startled, he leaped to her side. Resolutely passing one arm about her with his other hand he reached up and drew down the offending bough.

"Now kneel by my side, as I kneel." There was no demur or resistance.

"There now; lean against me so as to rest and steady yourself—that's better."

She had obeyed meekly. Now working with all the speed

possible, reaching first to the right and then to the left, she was able to maintain her equilibrium. "Put your arm around me, Miss Culpepper? The pain will be less and I can work faster."

Once more she obeyed, but this time haltingly. "There! at last," he exclaimed. "You are free and can go."

"But, Mr. Simonson, my knees are numb and I can't get up. You must—er, will you help me, *please*?" Now she was very humble, very appealing.

Stooping low he took her by the hands, but her limbs were so numb and exhausted even yet they refused to respond to her bidding.

"There's no way, Miss Culpepper, but for me to put my arms about you and rescue you from this—*Sabine* tree."

She smiled—and held up both her arms.

Together they walked down to the road where she had dismounted and left her horse. "And now, Mr. Simonson," she said, "how can I sufficiently reward you? And how rude I was—how can I ever forgive myself? Please tell me what I can do to—to—please you."

"What I did, Miss Culpepper, was nothing, and I have need of your forgiveness for my insolence; indeed I quite loathe myself. But if you want to make me very happy, out of the goodness of your heart, there are two things you can do."

"Name them!"

"First, forgive whatever pain or annoyance I may have caused you."

"'Tis done, Mr. Simonson." Then with a face full of pain, "O Mr. Simonson, you don't know how we suffer at our house. They talk about the '*Via Dolorosa*,' and the '*Ponte dei Sospiri*,'—Bridge of Sighs—but since these terrible times have come, and Harold has gone away, The Elms has become a Casa del Agoniscia—House of Anguish. Papa

is utterly broken, yet refuses to be reconciled; poor Mama bravely smiles but daily grows weaker; and I—well, perhaps for such as I no peace or rest ever was intended.”

The young lawyer tried to offer condolence but could not find just the right word.

“No, Mr. Simonson,” she continued, “you are not to blame for Harold’s act, though once, when I called at your office, I thought you were. How I despise myself for my conduct that day! I don’t see how you can bear the sight of me, Mr. Simonson. Of course, you’re a Union man, and that’s your privilege; and I count it an honor for you to be summoned to Washington to see the President, though Papa doesn’t see it that way. As for Harold, it was Marjorie that coaxed him, and persuaded him to go against us all. And all the while we were swearing by the Gildersleeves and would have died for them. Marjorie, how I hate her—*hate* her! Even if finally she marries Harold I shall never forgive her, or speak to her. If I were a man I’d kill her; if I were God I’d send her soul to hell. She’s wrecked our home—O Harold, Harold!”

Vergie was convulsed with grief and the young lawyer was unable to comfort her; to attempt any defense of Marjorie he knew would be futile.

“But, Miss Culpepper, I not only desired your forgiveness, but also—” He paused.

“Oh, yes,” Vergie replied, looking up through her tears, “and what was—secondly?” with an attempted smile.

“Your *friendship*!”

“Mr. Simonson, you know not what you ask; no, that’s impossible.”

“And why impossible, Miss Culpepper?”

“Oh—first of all, for your own sake.”

“You see, I’m selfish, Miss Culpepper—it is for my own sake I crave the boon for which I plead.”



"Why?" The question was sharp and unexpected.

"Well," for a moment taken back, "because I am interested in you, like you, find pleasure in being with you—because——"

"Stop, Mr. Simonson," she broke in abruptly. "You do not know me. They used to call me a 'Tigress'; now I am called a 'Traitor.' You see, I'm progressing. Next I suppose I shall be pointed out as 'Vergie, the Arch-Fiend.' No, Mr. Simonson, the gift of my friendship would be fatal to you. I honor your manhood; I wish you well in every way; with all my heart I thank you for the honor you have done me in asking for my friendship; and now—please help me to my saddle and let me go."

He took in his hand a dainty foot, barely visible in a white foam of skirts, and, lightly as a fawn might leap, she vaulted into the saddle.

"But may I not see you, oh, once in a great while?"

There was a moment's hesitation; then, in a voice very low, "Yes—if we should ever chance to meet again."

The horse she rode, which Dr. Culpepper had brought from Kentucky, sped away with a bound. At the turn of the road she looked back and waved her hand.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AN EVENING AT JOEL LEVERING'S

THE next afternoon the young lawyer went around to Singleton's livery and hired "Selim," Ham's finest saddle-horse.

"Thort y'd quit hossback roidin', Mistuh Simonson," said the loquacious liveryman, "an' become uh kunfuhm' p'dust'-naruh'n, seein' thut yo' walk s' much. W'ich way yo' gwine? Ef to'hd Springhaven Ah mout g' 'long."

"No, Mr. Singleton; I'm going out the Serepta road, possibly as far as Troas—will be back by evening, however."

"All roight, Mistuh Simonson. Ol' Selum's feelin' moight' peart; skuttish uz th' duvul t'day. Yo'll huv t' look out fuh 'im. S' long."

The young lawyer went "out the Serepta road," but as soon as possible made a wide detour and after a canter of six or eight miles might have been seen riding toward New Richmond. Strange to say, now he did not seem to be at all interested in Nature. The short-billed marsh wren, the warbling flycatcher, the Bohemian chatterer, and other birds common to that section sent cascades of song, rippling and trilling, through the woods; from the zenith came the clarion boom of the belated wild migrating swan pursuing with unerring flight its pathless way to summer climes; rabbits raced across the road; chipmunks playfully scampered among the leaves; and squirrels barked and whisked from tree to tree—but to all these he was oblivious. He was a confirmed nimrod, but no sanguinary passion was awakened

by the sight of a pair of wild turkeys not a hundred yards away. There had been music to his ears in the sound of falling nuts, the distant caw of crows, the long low cry of the titlark, and the high clear note of the robin redbreast; but now they were all unheeded. His horse leaped across a narrow stream; he saw it but did not think to apostrophize it—its poetry and music had vanished with the naiads and dryads with which only the day before he had held high communion. No; he had not lost his love of Nature, or his passion for the beautiful, the unique, the *sui generis*, the mysterious and inexplicable, but he had found all these elements, plus intelligence, plus articulate speech, plus emotion, plus fascination, plus a something men have always recognized but which no man ever has been able to analyze or explain—he had found all these in one marvelous composite personality.

He had no appointment with Vergie Culpepper—he rather thought she would not come; and yet—maybe she would. It was a bare possibility and he acted upon it. Presently he left the highway and rode to a certain buckthorn trec. No, she hadn't been there. Gladly he recalled all that had occurred the day before and was thankful that he had happened to pass that way when he did—glad, of course, wholly on the young lady's account. He was sorry he had used profanity, and had seemed callous and hard-hearted, but was glad that at last she had yielded and permitted him to rescue her from her painful position and entanglement. There was a slight thrill when he recalled that, for a brief moment, she had put her arms about him; and that, for another brief moment, he had actually held *her* in his arms. Of course, it had meant nothing, for they were not lovers, not so much as friends—she herself had said so most emphatically, had even given cogent reasons why they never could be friends. And did a Culpepper, once having taken



a position, ever change? The whole world answered, "Never!" Nevertheless he could not keep from recalling her face, her lithe and supple form so tall and graceful, her wealth of brilliant blue-black hair, her rich oriental complexion, and her milk-white teeth laughing through a pair of cupid-bow, cherry-red lips, her wonderful eyes, her shapely hands and arms, a dainty foot roguishly peeping out from a billowy foam of skirts, her rich dark-green riding habit, fitting her perfectly, and the jaunty hat she wore with its dash of red and green, and a snow-white aigrette. Lost in meditation, he was brought back to sentient realities by the sound of a horse's hoofs, and a voice saying,

"When holy and devout religious men  
Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them thence;  
So sweet is zealous contemplation."

"Is that 'Quoth Horace,' Miss Culpepper?" the young lawyer, turning, laughingly inquired.

"No, that's quoth a greater than Horace, though I suspect you'd have hard work convincing Papa. Don't you recall your Richard the Third?"

Vergie, after a little badinage, said: "I'll be honest with you; I came on purpose, and I should have been greatly disappointed had I not found you here. You see, I so much wanted to know if you had heard from Harold, and yesterday I was so excited I forgot to ask you."

For some reason the elation excited by the first part of her speech had entirely subsided by the time she had reached the end of the latter part. However, he reflected, that she had come at all, regardless of the reason, was something. It indicated that, to some extent at least, there was between them an *entente cordiale*; and it was a pleasure to be with her again. He was sorry he was unable to give her any

tidings of her brother, but tried to assure her by reminding her that he had been gone only a trifle over a month; also that he might have written to her, indeed probably had, and the letter in transmission had been lost.

The interview was brief, and to the young lawyer unsatisfactory. Still among the many reasons she urged why she could not remain longer there was one reason that had in it a measure of comfort: "If we are to have these little *tête-à-têtes* we must exercise great caution; for I, on the one hand, in having anything to do with you, am a very disobedient daughter; and you, on the other hand, in associating with a Culpepper, are running a very great risk."

Simonson regretted that he was under the ban at The Elms, for which, however, he could not blame her father, though her father was entirely in error regarding his complicity in influencing his son to espouse the Union; but he could not understand what peril he encountered in associating with whomsoever he pleased. Indeed, he declared that he would joyfully welcome any peril that would enable him to prove how sincerely he prized her friendship and how much he desired to possess it.

Vergie did not seem to note the latter part of his speech, but to the first part replied: "Ah, Mr. Simonson, you do not know your Union friends as well as we do. Papa is bold and outspoken, so they call him a 'fire-eater.' But your Nosses and Blaveys, though velvet-mouthed and satin-voiced, at heart are just as bitter, and possibly even more determined. Cæsar was not afraid of the 'fire-eaters,' but of certain men who were very silent and circumspect; and when he fell it was not at the hand of a 'fire-eater,' open and above board like Papa, but by the hand of a certain Mr. Brutus, who had always exercised the greatest discretion, and was Rome's most lauded mirror of fashion. I never could read Cæsar's 'et tu Brute' without weeping, and wishing I had

been there to hold in my lap the dying man's head and whisper in his ears a woman's word of comfort, or—to have avenged his death! Mr. Simonson, is a word to the wise sufficient? But lest one of *my* words would not be sufficient to convince *you* I have been prodigal with words, foolishly so perhaps." She was laughing now, and the young lawyer could not refrain from laughing with her.

She gathered up the reins to depart, when, as an after-thought, she said, "This is not 'Addio,' Mr. Simonson, as it seemed to be yesterday, but 'A rivederci'; not 'Adieu,' but 'Au revoir,' not 'Farewell forever,' but 'Good-bye, I shall see you again *soon*.'"

The young lawyer looked puzzled, and she added, "Of course, I shall see you at Uncle Joel Levering's this evening."

"But I thought you no longer went out, Miss Vergie; besides I'm sure I shall not be invited to the Levering's."

"Uncle Joel Levering's," she replied, "is the one place in New Richmond to which all creeds and political faiths can go without prejudice and with safe conduct both ways."

"You see, Mr. Simonson," she continued, "he is one of those Lord Brougham characters, able to bring together under one roof the most violent opposing factions, yet by the force of his character and personality prevent an outbreak. Papa thinks he ought to be made President of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society, should such a society ever be organized."

"Oh, yes, Uncle Joel is a rebel, through and through, else Papa wouldn't allow me to go there, but of the broad-minded, diplomatic sort—sort of a political tight-rope walker. Then he's free from all alarms. His eyes are defective, so he's under no obligation to enlist and in no danger of being drafted; he's rich and is immune from want; he's a high-minded gentleman and as such is above suspicion as spy or



conspirator, not," seemingly as an after-reflection, "that he'd ever discriminate against a man even though he were known to be both a spy and a conspirator."

She dashed away, leaving him to solve a possible conundrum. "Does she regard *me* as a spy, a conspirator? What put that idea into her head? My summons to Washington was supposed by the public to be in regard to the case against the Maple Creek counterfeiters which will be tried, of course, in the United States Federal Court—has *she* a different opinion?"

But the matter did not trouble him since she regarded it so lightly. Still her eulogy of Uncle Joel Levering, "A high-minded gentleman, and as such is above suspicion as spy or conspirator," would not be entirely dismissed.

Returning to New Richmond by the same circuitous route by which he had gone, he found on his table an invitation, as Vergie had predicted, to spend the evening at the residence of Joel Levering. His mind was instantly made up—he would go. Lincoln had told him to mix freely with the people, to "keep his weather-eye open and his mainsail-ear spread to the breeze," and to report to him from time to time "how things were going"; but—and we suspect the supreme incentive for going, though in his own mind not justification, was the desire to see Vergie Culpepper again.

The gathering proved to be both miscellaneous and heterogeneous. All faiths and factions, religious and political, were there, for the time dwelling together in peace and amity—a sort of armed neutrality, but with no thought on either side of surrender. Conversation was free and unrestrained and anyone was at liberty to introduce any subject he might elect, and to make any comment he saw proper—but everything must be strictly impersonal. Statement, affirmation and argument on any subject were not only permissible but desired; but contention, denunciation and in-

nuendo were under Uncle Joel's iron ban. Though an open and avowed sympathizer with the South, as a host he gave special deference to the opinions and arguments of the most ardent and uncompromising advocates of the policy and principles held by Mr. Lincoln.

There were light refreshments, some music, dancing and charades, a few young people's games, and, of course, much general conversation.

"By thuh way, Simonson," said Hank Gordon, taking a second "helping" of cake, "did yer see Mistuh Lincoln w'ile in Washington?"

"Yes, Mr. Gordon; it was on his invitation I went to Washington."

The young lawyer, glancing at Vergie, saw a danger signal. She was afraid he had made a mistake in letting it be known he had even seen Lincoln, much more had had a conference with him.

"Suppose he wanted you to accept a portfolio in his cabinet." It was Rod Clarke, meaning to slur the young lawyer to whom recently had been transferred considerable business formerly done by him. Fortunately, however, the young lawyer did not have to reply, as Abner Wilcox that moment asked:

"See much excitement going and coming; I mean Northerners going to join the army?"

"Yes, Mr. Wilcox, en route to Washington the cars were crowded."

"W'ich soid d' yer saiy wull whup?" broke in Nic Tutwiler. There was a low hum of laughter on account of the abruptness of the question.

"I'm not saying, Nic," was the good-natured reply.

"Wall, w'ich soid d' yer *think* wull whup?"

Looking at his questioner a moment he replied, "I *know*, Nic; hence I do not have to think or guess."

Every eye now was centered on the young lawyer, and there was a general shifting of chairs.

"Since you know so much, would you mind enlightening us poor devils who know so little?" It was Rod Clarke again.

"Certainly, Mr. Clarke. The side that can raise the most money and keep the greatest number of men in the field."

"You're mistaken, Simonson," exclaimed Voe Bijaw. "Every Southern man is as good as fifteen Northern men; hence the North must raise fifteen times as much money and as many soldiers as the South."

"Who says so, Mr. Bijaw?"

"Our—I mean President Davis, sir, of the Confederate States of America."

"You may be right, Mr. Bijaw," replied the young lawyer, feeling it was better to remain non-committal. As Bijaw was trying to carry water on both shoulders, the young lawyer was glad he had been able to exhibit him to the company in his true colors.

Uncle Joel Levering now put in a laboring oar and allowed that while "every Southern man mout be ekal to fifteen Northern men, 'twould take uh purty husky feller to handle fifteen Amsden Armentrouts."

A general discussion now followed in which the guests, in smaller groups, freely expressed themselves. It was noticed that the War-Democrats, almost to a unit, stood by McClellan and mildly censured Lincoln for "dabblin' in Mac's biznis." Logan was held in peculiar detestation by the "Jeff Davis wing," and was still "on probation" with the Lincoln following. Ben Butler was a common butt of ridicule, though, in a way, was liked, especially by the young men of all factions, because, as Nic Tutwiler said, "He'd foight lak hell an' swah lak uh trooppuh." Of Grant they didn't think much, though it was generally allowed "thut 'e



wuz uh hail uv uh foightuh ef thuh c'd unly kup 'im sobuh." Everybody felt sorry for "Old Abe; maint all roight but couldn' hold uh kaindle t' yuh Uncle Jaiffy." But Uncle Joel was of the opinion that "they'd bettuh wait till their chickens was hatched for," with a delicious non sequitor, "yo' kin naivuh tell thuh luck uv uh lousy cailf." And when Voe Bijaw spoke exultantly, though with assumed deprecation, of how the gallant Johnny Rebs "he'd whupped hell ou'n th' Billy Yanks ut Bull Run 'n' ut Ball's Bluff," Uncle Joel took up the cudgel and reminded the little editor how "a certain sleepy colonel by th' name uv Grant hed knocked thuh tah out'n 'm' ovuh en Missouri." No passion or prejudice could blind Uncle Joel to the extent that he couldn't recognize and appreciate a plain fact.

Vergie and Freda, crossing the room to speak to Mrs. Goldbeck and Deborah, stopped to shake hands with Hugh Grant and the young lawyer, who were standing apart. For a moment Hugh and Freda, who were believed to be engaged, were absorbed in a whispered colloquy.

"Mr. Simonson," said Vergie—"no, please don't shake hands with me. That would make us appear to be too friendly and would hurt you—everybody's watching us. If you've a chance you'd better tell the folks about talking over the counterfeiter case with Lincoln. Of course, that's not what you went to see him for, but it will do well enough for an excuse."

"That's mighty kind of you, Miss Culpepper, to put me on my guard. A *friend* could do no more."

"That'll do, Mr. Simonson," with a loud voice and toss of her head, which the young lawyer knew was meant to attract attention and disarm suspicion that their relations were in any way cordial. "Come, Freda!" in the same imperative manner, and the two young men were left to themselves.

"Where do you stand in this mix-up, Simonson?" said Hugh, in a low voice, but very earnestly.

"Why do you ask? Is there any question as to my position?"

"Pardon me, I mean no offense; but ever since zee leettl' moo-*zeek* teach-*aire* cut up his high jinks in New Richmond, making moon-*keys* of us all, it seems that most everybody's under suspicion, except, of course, Uncle Joel, Old Amsden and Quoth Horace. I think you're straight goods or I wouldn't be opening up to you the way I am."

"Thanks, Hugh, for your confidence; but whom do the folks think I am?"

"Oh, opinions vary, but, in a general way, the extremists of both sides think you're a secret agent, playing a double game."

"Jockeying?"

Hugh laughed. "Well, something like that, Mr. Simonson."

"I'm sorry, Hugh, that anyone should have such a poor opinion of me. I live openly and above-board, and I despise all shuffling and subterfuge. Of course, the best of people have their secrets, possibly even yourself and Miss Freda," with a meaning smile, "and a certain amount of diplomacy is not only allowable but desirable; but for down-right lying and bare-faced hypocrisy I have nothing but contempt. My inability to lash myself into a fury, like Amsden and Quoth Horace, I presume does cause people to view me with suspicion—but that I can't help. I am not obsessed, like Mr. Lincoln, by any one great idea, nor am I wedded, like Mr. Davis, to a great and much debated institution, but am a lawyer, detached; hence as a lawyer I have been trained to weigh evidence, and this, Hugh, I have done."

"And the result?"

"Legally the South is right; ethically, progressively, to

keep in rhythm with the forward march of civilization the North is right."

"And you, Mr. Simonson, stand for——?"

"The ethical, Hugh; for progress, for the best and highest civilization. But how to attain to the best—'ay, there's the rub——must give us pause.' If the Davises and Jacksons and Johnstons and Lees were base, vile men, our perplexity would not be so great; but they are not—they are as honest, conscientious, patriotic and God-fearing as the North. On the other hand, if the Lincolns and Sewards and Greeleys and McClellans and Shermans and Logans were pre-eminently pious, devout and God-fearing, then the problem would be less difficult of solution. Take it in this community, Hugh," continued the young lawyer, "I confess that I prefer the Southerners to the Northerners."

"To whom are you now referring, Mr. Simonson?" There was a humorous gleam in Hugh's eyes, but the young lawyer was too earnestly engaged discussing a difficult problem to observe it.

"Oh, I didn't know," carelessly, the smile yet lingering in his eyes, "but it might be Miss Vergie or Miss Marjorie. But please go on, Mr. Simonson."

"There's not much to add, Hugh. When it comes to honesty, piety, learning, culture, high principles, undaunted courage, and a sort of sanctified recklessness that scorns all consequences in maintaining the right, or assailing the wrong, according to the light he has, where can you find the equal of Dr. Fairfax Culpepper?"

"Then you don't think much of the Lincoln following?" Hugh Grant was mystified and showed it in his voice. "You're a Union man and yet are not wholly allied with the advocates of the Union."

"You're not a clear thinker, Hugh. I'm undivorcably and indissolubly allied with them so far as principles are



concerned—I simply do not share their bitter prejudices and unreasoning assumptions. I feel that men of the Dr. Culpepper class are just as honest, just as upright, just as worthy of respect and consideration as we are, only—they are mistaken.” Then, looking across to where old Joel Levering was holding forth, he added, “What a lovable man our host is, the very salt of the earth, and yet the Arméntrouts and Nosses and Blaveys, all good men, mark you, would like to hang him to the nearest lamp-post.”

There was a moment's pause. Fred Gildersleeve and Lela Frothingay, approaching, wanted to know if they were “plotting against the Whites”; and Dr. Boynton, joining them, jocularly inquired if they knew that “Richmond had fallen and that Old Abe had proclaimed himself Dictator,” a standing New Richmond joke.

Presently, however, they passed on and the young lawyer very earnestly said, “Hugh, where do you stand? Turn about is fair play, you know; you asked me and now I return the compliment. Where do you stand?”

“Damned if I know, Simonson.”

“Thank you, Hugh.” Simonson liked Hugh Grant. He was so blunt and straightforward. “Thank you, old man,” he repeated. “I admire your *piety*, even if I can't comprehend your *wisdom*.” They both laughed outright.

“Simonson,” the young man began slowly, now evidently very much in earnest, “I like you and believe in you—you're straight goods. What you say, too, I more than half believe. It doesn't seem right to me to bust up the Union simply because a few Southern slaveholders, and, comparatively, there's but a handful of them, can't have their own sweet way. On the other hand, the niggers belong to them and I don't like the way the Black Abolitionists talk. Then, again, I'm a Democrat, and to force a government on a people, not only without their consent but actually over their

protest, as the Abe Lincoln government's trying to do down South, naturally causes my gorge to rise. In fact, Simonson, and you'll pardon me for saying it, it seems to me a damned outrage. Still 'there are mitigating circumstances,' as you lawyers say, and this 'ethical, progress, higher civilization' line of talk you hand out always impresses me; and I'll be honest with you, sometimes 'thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian'—for that's about what it comes to with these Abe Lincoln Republicans. Though I will say for you, Simonson, you're an exception to the rule; for, in old Amsden's sight, 'not to be a Republican is to be a *hell-ion*,' to use the amiable expression he so often uses.

"But, Simonson, were I ever so soundly convinced, what could I do? There's Father. Do you suppose Jedediah Grant, grandest old man that ever lived, would consent to his son's taking up arms against the Southern Confederacy? Never! Mother's not so set in her ways; in fact, sometimes I think she's half in sympathy with the North—you see mother's sister Annie married a Chicago Board of Trade man—but father? Why, he's so stiff and straight for secession he actually bends back over his heels. Sometimes I think he's coming, till I see him turn a corner and realize that he's a-going. No, Jedediah, the unterrified and uncompromising, would never give his consent.

"'Why not go as Harold Culpepper went?' perhaps you're saying. Oh, no! I'll tell you, Simonson, there's a spice of deviltry in all the Culpeppers. 'They're the Morgan breed of folks,' as Lige Ferris says—their muscles are too sinewy, and their blood's too red and fiery. Handsome, too! Vergie over there always takes my breath, she's so *unreasonably* stately and beautiful. No, Simonson, I could never go back on father and mother, not even if the whole Ship of State were on fire—father and mother first, if you please!"

"Then," pausing a while as if in contemplation, "there's Freda."

"Yes, Hugh," said the young lawyer, wondering how Uncle Joel's daughter viewed the situation.

"I don't mind telling you, Simonson, though 'mum's' the word. Freda and I are engaged; have always been engaged, I reckon—just like Harold and Marjorie."

"And Freda stands in your way?" queried the young lawyer, afraid Hugh might think it best to say nothing more. "Of course, Freda agrees with her father in everything," with a slightly rising inflection.

"No, there's where you're off, old man; in fact, I'm at sea myself. Freda always keeps me guessing, but this time I'm up a stump for sure. Sometimes she brags up Jeff Davis, and Bob Toombs, and that son of the right hand Benjamin, and the old man Rhett, and Raphael Semmes, and Peter Beauregard, till I think she's worse than old Joel. Then she laughs and calls me such 'a dear old silly,' and I see that she's been 'playing horse' with me all the time. Then, again, she'll take just the opposite course and you'd think, to hear her talk, that Abe Lincoln was a sort of second Jesus Christ, and his cabinet ministers archangels, and the Republican platform the whole Bible in epitome, and Union folks the salt of the earth, only to find, at last, that I've been jiggered again."

"But, Hugh," the young lawyer, greatly amused, broke in, "all in all, taking everything into consideration, and other things being equal, and reducing everything to the last analysis——"

"Oh, hel-up! hel-up!" cried Hugh, in mock despair, at the same time making a ludicrous grimace.

"Where does Freda stand?"

"Like an angel in the sun, sir, and all the constellations rejoice to do her homage!"



"Very fine, Hugh," replied the young lawyer, amused at the young fellow's enthusiasm.

"Yes, sir, and that's not half enough, but you see I can't turn out those 'mellifluous felicities and exquisitenesses,' and 'Oh, me darlin's, me darlin's,' the way you professional jaw-smiths do. But on the level, Simonson, I sometimes think Freda's more than half a Unionist."

Edythe Fernleaf, a grass widow—who introduced in Raleigh County a new style of spelling, and the divorce habit, she being the only divorcee in the county—now came up, informing them that the "postoffice" was open, and specially insisting that Mr. Simonson should inquire, for she was certain there was a letter for him. At the same time she appropriated Hugh Grant and bore him away, much to Miss Freda's disgust.

Going to the "post office" in the adjoining room, and stooping low to the "general delivery window," the young lawyer was surprised to find the lady postmaster was Marjorie Gildersleeve. Rapidly looking through a large number of "letters," Marjorie turned and said, in Mamie Well's stereotyped manner, which was the talk of the town:

"No, Mr. Simonson, nothing at all, nothing at all. Knew you were looking for mail, yes, but there's nothing at all. Sorry, but there's no mail for you." It was all very funny, and the young lawyer, taken by surprise at the manner and phraseology of her reply, forgot a very gallant speech that had been, an instant before, on the tip of his tongue. Then with a sudden accession of feeling, which Marjorie quickly noted, and which caused her to lower her glance:

"It is not *male* I want; it is—is—one of the opposite sex. And I *know* I have come to the right place, and that *she* is here."

With a low voice, not trusting herself to look up, she replied, "What we *want* and what we *need*, Mr. Simonson,

may be quite different and entirely unrelated things or persons. It is so easy for one to be mistaken; and even the desire, once granted, might pall in a day, so fickle is the human heart and so shifting are the tastes of men." Then, seeing his sore disappointment, she gently added, "And, Mr. Simonson, you should remember that the denier often is far unhappier than the one denied; for it is *such* a happiness to give when the whole heart joyfully accompanies the gift. You know what the Good Book says."

Others now were clamoring for their "mail," and the young lawyer regretfully turned away. Passing to the next room, he came face to face with Vergie Culpepper. She was going home, she said, and was waiting for Calhoun Levering, her escort. She looked like some Goddess of the Night. Her eyes had all the radiancy of the stars. Her deep passionate contralto voice set all his nerves a-tingle. Her hand at parting added a touch of fire. Even after she had gone her presence seemed to remain and to fill the room.

"Are there two of me?" he said to himself. "And am I in love with two women?" Is there such a thing as *heart polygamy*? Are there two kinds of love, the one spiritual, and the other material? And am I responsible for this inward susceptibility to both? And is it base in me to confess,

" 'How happy I could be with either,  
Were t'other dear charmer away'?"

Angry with himself, disgusted, he bade his host and hostess good-night.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SECRET SOCIETIES IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS—A PILGRIMAGE

THUS far hope had been entertained that the war, with all its attendant horrors, would soon be over; but with the advent of the new year it became evident that no compromise or conciliation was possible. The clans, both North and South, were gathered and

“Cæsar’s spirit, ranging for revenge,  
With Atè by his side, come hot from hell,  
Shall in these confines, with a monarch’s voice,  
Cry ‘Havock,’ and let slip the dogs of war.”

Now a backward glance revealed the fact that from the day of Lincoln’s election, elected wholly by Northern States, war had been inevitable; and that from the Lincoln-Douglas Debate and John Brown’s Raid at Harper’s Ferry the South had been sternly preparing to submit all her grievances to the arbitrament of the sword—the writer chances to know from Jefferson Davis’ own lips that the President of the Southern Confederacy never for a moment doubted but the withdrawal from the Union of the Southern States would result in war; and Mr. Lincoln’s utterances leave no doubt but he was equally convinced, long before he left Springfield, that he would be able to retain and maintain the territorial integrity and the administrative entity of the Federal Government only by a resort to arms; and that he, Lincoln, had grimly, though reluctantly, resolved not to shrink from



the ordeal, however fierce it might be, and "if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether' . . . with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in."

During the months of his presidency the "Railsplitter" had also revealed an unexpected trait of character clearly prophetic of the course he would pursue and the length to which he would go; also lifting the curtain that hid from the gaze of both North and South an unescapable bloody future—a *will* as inflexible as Cromwell's and a *purpose*, relentless as fabled Fate's, to bring back the States, and to free the slaves; and that to accomplish this he would if necessary, like another Cromwell, seize all the reins of government, rewrite the Constitution, under the plea of "military necessity" enact his own laws, and, in short, himself be the Government. By the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* he had already usurped a prerogative of Congress, defied the Federal Judiciary, and clothed the Presidential office with undreamed of prerogatives, himself exercising all the prerogatives of the Legislative, the Judicial, and the Executive. "The plain truth was that," as one of the President's most ardent defenders explained, "many things not permitted by the Constitution must be done to preserve the Constitution." But the nation was none the less shocked, not so much by the isolated act itself as by the revelation of what it must now expect, namely, war, relentless war, war to the last dollar and to the last drop of blood, war to the *death* of the Southern Confederacy or to the last gasp of the Federal Government.

With the new year came the Bismarckian War Secretary Stanton, man of blood and iron, who always seemed to both fear and hate Lincoln, the only man he ever did fear and who, strangely enough, was the last to look into Lincoln's living eyes, and in that moment utter Lincoln's greatest eulogy: "Now he belongs to the Ages"; and with Stanton's coming an electric thrill went through the whole War Department. But even Stanton was less relentless than Lincoln, except when Lincoln's sympathies were touched by a personal appeal and to exercise clemency would not affect his progress toward the goal toward which his face was unalterably set.

In the East there was an immediate aggressivity. Burnside took command of the Department of North Carolina, Roanoke Island was seized, Newbern fell, Fort Pulaski succumbed, Beaufort was occupied, and the Eastern seaboard became a prison wall to the Confederacy.

In the West, Grant was forging to the fore. Forts Henry and Donelson yielded to his pounding, New Madrid, Island No. 10, and, finally, Shiloh.

The navy, too, felt the surge of the new *regime*. The Monitor, by a single combat *à outrance*, worsted the Merrimac, the Confederate terror, while only a month later Farragut, lashed to the mast, had sailed victorious, through a tempest of flame and destruction, to the city of New Orleans, and hoisted over the mint the Stars and Stripes.

All Southern Illinois was stirred by these mighty movements, all of them so adverse to the hopes and prayers of the Southern element; and nowhere was there greater bitterness felt than in New Richmond. And to think that their own townsmen, Noss and Blavey, had persuaded many of the very flower of Raleigh County's young manhood to go to the war! And Logan, for whom they had often voted, was now in high command in the Union army; and that,

altogether, there now were in the neighborhood of forty regiments of Illinois men fighting under the standard of the Galena tanner.

Even the War Democrats were far from being happy. They knew they were distrusted by their Union colleagues, and were scorned by their former confederates. Besides, to lawyers, like Judge Gildersleeve, the new legislation by Congress was regarded as being revolutionary, while Mr. Lincoln's acts were profoundly alarming.

But to Southern sympathizers, like Dr. Culpepper and Jedediah Grant, each day brought a fresh crucifixion. Fortunately, Jedediah Grant possessed a happy optimism and a saving sense of humor—in short, he was more a man of the world and had the sportsman's disposition, the temper of a soldier of fortune; hence he could be a good loser whether the stake was great or small.

Not so Dr. Culpepper. He could not bend; he could not retreat; it was impossible for him to compromise. This possibly was due to a double strain of Indian blood; for, besides the blood of Pocahontas, the royal founder of the F. F. V.'s, two hundred years later at Cumberland Gap, as the Culpeppers were gradually following the tide of civilization westward, a Culpepper had married another Indian princess, Zohanozoheton—Herald of Dusk and Dawn—so named because, though her coming was heralded at Dusk, she was not born till Dawn. She was the only child of the famous Chief Razometah, who, though the steadfast friend of the whites, was noted for his implacable hatreds and turbulent spirit when smarting under some real or fancied injury. If there was wanting documentary proof of the Indian ancestry of the Culpeppers, the straight jet-black hair, eagle eyes, and a certain Indian terseness and directness of speech and action of Dr. Culpepper, and the wild beauty



and stately bearing of his daughter, supplied whatever supplementary evidence was needed.

Possibly, too, this wild forest strain in his blood accounted for Dr. Culpepper's passion for the poet Horace. Horace lived in the hill country, the Sabine Hills, and describes rural scenes, and the joys of rural life, with wonderful vividness; Horace frequently went to war and sang in lofty strains of siege and battle, of struggles unto death and bloody victories; withal Horace was a pagan moralist and penned some of the loftiest reflections enshrined in literature; in short, Horace was such a poet as Razometah, Dr. Culpepper's ancestor, *might* have been, and uttered thoughts that stirred and thrilled the Indian nature that still remained in him.

But now even Horace failed him. The Sabine farm, and the wars he celebrated, were too far away and too remote in point of time. Moreover, he was not in the humor to enjoy Horatian jests, not now in tune with his philosophical reflections—for, with greater truth perhaps than the blacksmith realized when he said it, "The Doc hez on his *war paint* now."

However, there was a sparsity of literature that was to his liking. The weekly visits of Pollard's *Examiner*, published in Richmond, Virginia, of course, was eagerly read, but that consumed less than an hour per week; Memphis and New Orleans papers occasionally were received, but they were uncertain. A priest named Father Ryan, a resident of Mobile, Alabama, published a volume of poetry. Dr. Culpepper secured a copy of it and read it carefully. "The holy father," was his only comment, "is loyal to the core, and, doubtless, is a good man; but he's too gentle—there's not enough *fire and blood*!" A New Orleans Presbyterian preacher, named A. L. Balmer, issued a volume of sermons on "State Sovereignty and Negro Subjection the Divine

Plan." Evidently the preacher was a *soldier* of the cross—at war. Reading a certain sentence, furious, ultra-Southern, but very disjointed, the Doctor laughed and said, "Must have broken his pen here. Ah, I'd like to shake hands with that man; he's got *spunk* and *fight!*" One book, however, afforded him unusual pleasure. It was by Bishop Boak, of Louisividia, but now a major-general in the Confederate army. It was entitled, "Loyalty to God and *State* the Highest Duty of Man." There was also a sub-title, "Whither Thou Goest I Will Go."

But Dr. Culpepper now found his supreme satisfaction in Old Testament accounts of how God "smote his enemies hip and thigh and did break their teeth," of night onslaughts when taunting foes were put to the sword "and the streams did flow with blood," of the destruction of Ammonites and Amorites, Hittites and Hivites, Jebusites and Gergesites, along with cruel persecutions of God's people by invading and subjugating armies, and captivities inflicted because they would not bow the neck to insolent foes, or submit to alien and blasphemous doctrines; and, finally, David's Imprecatory Psalms, which, however, usually were reserved for Sunday reading.

But through all his reading of wars and tumults and fierce reprisals ever and anon his lips would quiver, and his heart would cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" In a moment, however, these tender emotions would be sternly repressed and he'd be ready to face the world as haughtily and implacably as Razometah, his ancestor, had done.

After the party at Uncle Joel Levering's, Simonson had not seen Vergie Culpepper. That night he had made up his mind no longer to aspire even to her friendship. He was afraid of her—she was too vital, too intense, too beautiful.

Even her gentler side had for him an element of terror; for he felt she would not love like other women. Her queenly face and form and bearing told of a passion which, once aroused, would be tumultuous and unappeasable. He could love her, of that he was certain—indeed confessed that, despite himself, he was already almost in love with her. But if now he was so thrilled by the simple sight of her, the casual touch of her hand, the wondrous music of her voice, though uttering only social platitudes and commonplaces, what would it be once within the periphery of her arms, and in the unrestrained intimacy of married life; when, having rounded out and perfected the splendor of her maidenhood, she had attained to the glorious and transcendent ideals of mature womanhood. His heart thrilled at the thought, but, in the end, he definitely determined to banish her from all his future thoughts and ambitions.

Fortune favored him in this resolution. The following day was tempestuous, with frequent torrents of rain, and all out-door life was abandoned. Then the noon mail brought him a letter from Judge Advocate General Holt, written by order of the President. It stated that the President desired him to make a tour of Southern Illinois and ascertain for him the drift of public sentiment; that the President requested him to go at once, and that, if anything came to his notice of vital importance demanding instant action he should report in person at Washington immediately—otherwise one report by mail covering the entire situation would do; and that upon his return from his tour of investigation he should confer with Ezra Unkmyer, at Onsted, whom he was sending out as provost-marshal.

Accordingly he wrote a civil note to Vergie, apprising her that he was called away on legal business. He felt duty bound to do this much on account of his plea for her friendship and to save her the inconvenience and humiliation of



future trips to the buckthorn tree with the thought that he was expecting her and would be disappointed if she failed to come.

He also had a brief conference with Judge Gildersleeve, advising with him as to what course he would better pursue, what alleged business had brought him to the various points he designed to visit, and explaining to the Judge certain business matters concerning which inquiries would probably be made during his absence, and departed on the three o'clock stage.

He was too well known at several of the county seats to assume any disguise. A disguise sometimes is useful when seeking to learn an individual's or a community's secrets, but the young lawyer was seeking the drift of public sentiment; hence a disguise was not necessary. He therefore assumed the role of a seeker of a better location to practice his profession than New Richmond, a hail fellow and in no hurry, and by no means averse to social pleasure and gaiety. The social feature of the trip did not appeal to him; however, he remembered hearing Mr. Lincoln remark that women have a special fondness for political intrigue, but are less cautious than men as to what they say, and he must avail himself of every possible source of information.

In no respect did the tour prove to be eventful. At Berlin, county seat of Stuttgart County, everybody was for the Union. At Bingen, county seat of Kaiser County, the Union sentiment was even stronger than at Berlin. At hotel, courthouse, on the street, there was but one sentiment. "Vat? Vite mit dat, vat is it, Herr Tavis? Not py damsie. Hoch der Presiden'! Ve vite mit Sigel, er Osterhaus, er an' toder py dam man dat vite mit der Hunion!"

However, as he journeyed toward Cleopas, Calhoun County, the young lawyer found a decided drift toward the Southern Confederacy. Ultra anti-administration papers

everywhere were in evidence, rabid pro-slavery, anti-Lincoln talk was common, and, what was still more significant, young mothers were naming their babies "Lee," and "Davis," and "Calhoun," and "Rhett," and "Beauregard," and one "Robert Toombs."

In these Southern counties, too, he was able to discern the tremendous impress of Logan's personality. Wherever he had gone, even in the remotest districts, he had left a trail of light. Those whom he had not converted he had awed; some who had threatened him he had taken through the "third degree" till they were eager to eat out of his hand; and to timid Union men he had imparted both zeal and courage. Out of the "Black Belt" Logan had brought some of the bravest men that ever followed the flag and kept step to the music of the Union. Formerly their children, insulted and brow-beaten, had dared only to whisper the parental name, half-ashamed and terror-stricken; but now they proudly answered, "Yes, father belonged to Company Blank, Blank Number Regiment, Illinois Volunteers. He gave his life for his country at the Battle of Shiloh," or some other blood-emblazoned name.

At Claudia, Claudia's County, he found an agent of the Southern Confederacy buying horses and mules "for the New York market." A short run up to Cincinnati enabled the young lawyer to learn that at that point they were diverted, via Cynthiana, to the Confederate army. Returning to Claudia he found that even Union men, though professing to hate "the Jeff Davis Government," were not averse to taking Jeff-Davis money for their stock.

At Rapidan, Rapid Anne County, at a party given by a brother attorney whom he previously had met, he came in contact with a second Felix Palfrey, only he was not a "teach-aire of zee moo-zik an'—ah, lang-widge'," but, in this case, a naturalist. The young lawyer was amused at the

credulity of his host, a stanch Union man, as well as of all the guests, but remembered how all New Richmond, himself included, had been equally gullible the preceding spring and summer.

"Who is your interesting guest?" inquired the young lawyer.

"Oh, some *lunatic* the women folks have picked up. Don't know who he is—seems to have escaped from some museum or side show. But polite—guess that's the reason all the women folks take to him so. Looks like a nigger, don't he? Says he ain't, though. An' yet he's knowin' enough, too. Worms and bugs and lizards—why he's out sasshayin' with the farmers all over the country."

Subsequently the young lawyer learned that emissaries of the Southern Confederacy were thoroughly patrolling Southern Illinois, and doubtless keeping the Davis Government fully informed. Some of them, like Palfrey and Jules Francois, whom the lawyer met at his friend's house in Claudia, were gentlemen of the highest culture and refinement. They posed as artists, teachers, *literati*, and gentlemen of fortune. They were well dressed, amply supplied with money, courtly in bearing, and easily found their way into the best circles of the community. Others were of the homespun type, coming in touch with traders, artisans, farmers and common laborers. Often Southerners themselves, even those most passionately devoted to what we now call the Lost Cause, did not know they had entertained men who were in closest touch with Mr. Davis and the Government on the James.

But it was at Sardis, county seat of Kahoka County, the young lawyer received the most disquieting intelligence. It was very vague, a rumor just at its inception, scarcely more than a surmise, yet to the young lawyer's mind it was gravely portentous. Union men believed it, yet confessed they did



not have one scintilla of evidence; on the other hand, Southern sympathizers laughed and scoffed at their Union neighbors, and declared someone must have *drugged their bit-  
ters*.

The idea that had gained considerable currency, more than a surmise, yet somewhat nebulous, was that secret societies were being organized in aid of the Southern Confederacy; that forts, under the guise of mammoth tobacco barns, cattle sheds, and the like, were being erected all over Southern Illinois; that members of these lodges were bound to secrecy and obedience with blood-curdling oaths; that they were being taught the manual of arms and trained for war; that they were to replenish the Southern army as rapidly as possible with armed and thoroughly trained soldiers, and, finally, if at last they found themselves sufficiently numerous and strong they were to rise up openly at home, subjugate their neighbors, make them prisoners of war or soldiers of war, on the Southern side, of course, and unfurl from the cupola of every courthouse in Southern Illinois the Confederate Stars and Bars. Judge Ellery was the young lawyer's informant.

"But isn't that just a mare's nest, Judge Ellery?" asked the young lawyer.

"Worse than that, Mr. Simonson," replied the Judge. "I'm afraid it's a *hornet's* nest."

"And do you mean to say that possibly all Southern Illinois is honeycombed with these Southern Confederacy aid societies?"

"Not only possibly but altogether probably."

"And that our next door neighbor, supposed to be a stanch Union man, may be a member?"

"Certainly! Why not?"

"Whom do you think, Judge Ellery, has devised this

clever scheme, portentous to us, but full of promise to the Davis Government?"

"The shrewdest bunch in the world, the Southern politicians."

"Can you be more definite, Judge?"

"Well, Simonson," reflectively, "what about Felix Palfrey? He had free rein in Raleigh County about six months—do you have any idea what he was up to? Why, he could have organized the whole county in that time, and—probably did!

"Then there's your Jules Francois," continued the Judge, "whom you met at Claudia. You had no doubt but he was another Palfrey; but was there anything to prevent him from pocketing Claudias County and walking off with it? You tell me you have come across at least a score of these birds of passage whom you believe to be in the service of the Davis Hades Annex; but what are they doing up here? Reporting the weather? Forecasting next year's crops? Asking the Egyptians if they've found out yet what the Sphinx is thinking about?"

"What you say looks reasonable, Judge Ellery, but what's our smart men——"

"To whom are you now referring, Simonson? Amsden Armentrout?" Judge Ellery laughed gleefully. Continuing, "Good old Amsden—but how he must have amused Palfrey! Truth is, Simonson, we've got right on our side, and we've got the men and the money; and we're going to smash old Jeff and his bogus government, bag and baggage, into a cocked hat. But we'll have to do it by *main strength and awkwardness*. Even old Abe, and we all love him—his strong point is not wisdom but *goodness*. If your Uncle Jeffy had been in Lincoln's place he'd have made McClellan take Richmond in thirty days or he'd have kicked him out, by the Old Harry, and gone and taken it himself. And yet,

after almost a year—what? Why Old Abe and Georgie are just fussin' yet, and Jeffy and Bobby are laughing up their sleeves. I'm not a Southerner, Simonson. I'm an Englishman, by way of Connecticut, and I'm a Union man from the word go, but I tell you now that what we get we'll get by hard knocks. The South hasn't the men or the money, and their political system is rotten. Now that they've started they'll just keep on seceding. Jeffy will lose some of *his* States—why not?—and Brown and Vance will lose some of their counties, and counties will lose townships—why not? But Bobby Lee, and the little New Orleans rooster, and the Johnston boys, and that lean, lank Presbyterian Jackson, and a few other Southern officers, with a handful of half-starved and half-naked men, will keep our big Northern armies on the hike, and guessing many a day. Simonson, when it comes to the fine Italian hand, and 'the gentlemen-advance-and-salute-your-partners' act, the Southerners are past masters, while we of the North are yet cutting out pictures and pasting them in a book in the kindergarten school."

The young lawyer very emphatically disagreed with the Judge regarding the superior generalship and statesmanship of the South, but was troubled by his firm opinion that for months disloyal societies were being organized in Southern Illinois.

"Judge Ellery, where do you suppose is the headquarters of these Secession Societies?"

"Probably not more than thirty miles from where we are now sitting—over in your county."

The young lawyer was taken back—shocked. "What! do you mean in Raleigh County?"

"More than likely," the Judge calmly replied.

"And in New Richmond?"

"No—not far from Thyratira; maybe just over in Zebulon County."



“And do you think they’re in earnest—mean to attack us—to help overthrow the Government—to——?”

“Do you suppose, Simonson, they’re imperiling their precious necks for nothing—just for *fun*? What they’re doing, if we’re not mistaken, is *treason*—and they know it is treason. Do men take such chances except when desperate? And can anyone predict with certainty what desperate men will do?”

After leaving the office of Judge Ellery, the young lawyer inquired at the post office for mail, thinking there must be several letters for him. There chanced to be but two: one from Vergie Culpepper, the other from Marjorie Gildersleeve. Both were brief. The one from Miss Culpepper was as follows:

“The Elms, Jan. 10, 1862.

“Samuel Simonson, Esq.: From Calhoun Levering, who met Mrs. Gildersleeve this morning, I have just learned that you are away on strictly *legal* business; that you will be away indefinitely; and that, before you return, you *may* be in Claudia and Cleopas. Instantly the thought came to me: ‘As both Claudia and Cleopas overlook Kentucky, maybe Mr. Simonson will see Harold, of or from whom, as yet, we have no tidings’; for possibly Brother has gone back to Kentucky, and has not joined the Union army at all. If you should see him, do not mention this letter—telegraph me at once, so that I may come to him! Will you not do this much for me, please, even though I am a *Rebel*? You did me a favor once—have you forgotten?—but for which I should now be with ‘Massa in the cold, cold ground,’ and that emboldens me to have hope that you will not decline this request.

VIRGINIA LEE CULPEPPER.

“P. S.—I have been to the buckthorn tree *twice* since you left—I’m so interested in *botany*! Oh, yes, the tree reminded me of you, and of ever so many things you said, especially ‘*Dammitt*’—is it spelled correctly? The first time I went the wind was blowing, and when Buckthorn Tree, Esq., saw me he just bowed and bowed at me; and I said right out loud, ‘Oh, Mr. Buckthorn Tree, ’tis *I* that should feel grateful to

you; and I am *so* thankful that I ever met you'—that is, the *Buckthorn Tree*. V. C."

The other letter, from Marjorie, was equally characteristic:

"The Maples, Jan. 10, 1862.

"Mr. Samuel Simonson.—My Dear Friend: Papa is at Patmos, holding court. Before leaving home, he charged me that, in case you did not return before this date, and in case he had not returned by the same time, I should transmit to you at Sardis, County of Kahoka, State of Illinois, the following memoranda and affidavits, in Coughem *versus* Sneezem case, to wit—all of which you will find under separate cover. I cannot refrain from telling you how proud we are of you, *always*, of course, but now especially so, over your latest victory, namely, *the* great case you had before the Supreme Court last autumn. The judges, *en banc*, have just handed down their decision—in *your favor*! The Chief Justice told Mr. Goldbeck, who chanced to be present, that, for lucidity of treatment, cogency of reasoning, legal insight, exposition, interpretation, and application of law to a given case, and felicity of verbal expression, he regarded you as being *a very wonderful young man*. Mr. Goldbeck was at The Maples the next night and, when he told Papa what the Chief Justice said of you, Papa slapped his knee—you know he always does that when he gets excited, or is greatly in earnest—and said, '*Dog my cats!* have they just found that out up at Springfield?' And Mama and Fred and I instantly piped up and said, '*We knew it all the time!*' You've been gone five weeks, but it *seems* ever and ever so much longer. I was up to the Gildersleeve-Simonson office yesterday to mail some papers to Papa, but I didn't stay very long—it was so *lonesome*. I wanted to peek into *our* room, but I was afraid to. Mama and Fred say for me to tell you that they think of you every day, and that you *must* hurry home. Mama, you know, always must have a little postscript—'And tell Sammy that I always pray for him'—and so does

"MARJORIE."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE—A WILD MIDNIGHT RIDE

IT was late in February before the young lawyer returned to New Richmond. He was glad to get back into the old groove, and to resume the normal routine of his daily life. His reading had been neglected, his business interrupted, and his correspondence was greatly in arrears. There were friends, too, whom he was eager to see: Judge Gildersleeve, "the dear old Judge," as he always mentally called him; and Fred, "of the same high quality and consistency"; and Hugh Grant, for whom he had a great liking; and, finally, Albert and Freda Levering, who had always been to him very much as the Gildersleeve young people. Of course, there were others whom he highly esteemed, despite political differences, but the Gildersleeves and Leverings and Hugh Grant were nearest to him.

But his dreams of leisure and literature and legal studies and practice were not soon to be realized.

During his absence something had "happened." What it was, no one seemed to know. If there were those who did know, and we now know there were many such, no information was forthcoming. But the situation was confessedly ominous; on this point there was universal agreement. That none was able, or at least willing, to tell just what it was or by whose aid or agency, or what was the ultimate object or purpose, did not tend to promote public tranquillity.

One thing, however, was indisputable—the very air was rife with sedition. A change had come over the Davis ad-



herents—they were now bold, assertive, and defiant. Southern sympathizers no longer hesitated to express themselves, and that, too, in terms that elsewhere would have been regarded as treasonous. Even in the court house and on the street the Government at Washington was bitterly assailed, and the Government at Richmond was enthusiastically eulogized. The Reverend Henry Lee Frothingay was delivering a series of "patriotic sermons," one of them being on "Anglo-Saxon Supremacy and Negro Subordination." Across the street the Reverend Yancey M. Bascom but recently had preached on "Whom Shall We Have to Reign Over Us, Biblically Considered."

One day Buck Sandifer, standing in front of Darnblazer & Russell's drug store, shouted: "Hooray for Jeff Davis and good old Bobby Toombs!" Jack Hathaway, who had fought with Grant at Belmont, Henry, and Donelson, now home on a ten days' furlough, promptly knocked him down. The Union soldier was arrested and fined, with cost, \$18.75; Buck Sandifer was given an ovation. Ham Singleton set up the drinks all around, and Nic Tutwiler, being several sheets to the wind, tried to sing "Maryland, My Maryland"; but, as he had the asthma, soon ran out of breath and had to give it up.

One Saturday Bill Snodgrass, the leader of the Mule Creek Gang, assailed Joe Henderson, another Union soldier, badly wounded in the right arm and home on a furlough. The doctors reported that his injuries were fatal. Snodgrass was arrested, but immediately released, over fifty leading citizens crowding forward to sign his bond.

Later on, especially after the Battle of Shiloh, it was observed that the old Raleigh County feuds had been healed. The "Mule Creek Gang" and the "Thompson Creek Terrors" were no longer at war with each other; the Huston and Henniker, and the Crickwell and Sneddiker factions

also had come together and now were fraternizing. And yet from a time so remote that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary these feuds and factions had existed; and more than once in the Court House Square of New Richmond, and on the streets, had battled against each other unto death.

"Sammy," said Judge Gildersleeve one day, "they all pull together. Something we know nothing about has happened, and it's no little something. Think of Bill Snodgrass and Buck Sandifer making up, and their two gangs of cutthroats all drinking out of the same jug and bottle, joining hands, and singing 'Blest be the tie that binds!' And going to church, too! The Hustons and Hennikers, Crickwells and Sneddikers, Rockwells and Applegates—what do you think of it? Likewise, social barriers have vanished over night. Who would have thought of Dr. Culpepper, and Joel Levering, and old Jedediah Grant ever becoming 'hail fellows well met' with these Mule Creek, and Thompson Creek, and Piper Prairie desperadoes? I tell you, Sammy, a master mind has been at work, and the cleverest trick of a generation has been——"

"Hold on, Judge Gildersleeve! Judge Ellery——"

"What about Judge Ellery, Sammy?" said Judge Gildersleeve, looking out at the window facing the public square. "Do you see the Judge?"

"No, Judge Gildersleeve; but between what you've just said, and certain things Judge Ellery told me when I was at Sardis, I think I have discovered the key to the whole situation.

Judge Gildersleeve smiled incredulously. "All right, Sammy, fire away! Let's have it."

Simonson then related the conversation between himself and Judge Ellery, Judge Gildersleeve occasionally interrupting with a question, or indulging in a long, low

whistle when something particularly striking was narrated. When the young lawyer was through, Judge 'Gildersleeve looked up and said:

"Sammy, you've hit the nail square on the head the first lick. As Abe said to Douglas, 'The parts all fit, and there's no getting around it.' And Felix Palfrey's the scoundrel that's turned the trick. And we all thought he was so funny—so damned innocent and helpless we all wanted to feed him on stick-candy and loaf-sugar. Hell!" The Judge didn't often swear—was, in fact, a devout churchman—but just now his feelings overcame him.

"Sammy, Judge Ellery is right—we're all a set of dratted numskulls! Oh, gee-whiz, mama, mama, what a mess we've made of everything! Just sat 'round with our fingers in our mouths and let that little 'Oh, yo' zo ver' strenge lang-widge I cann' spik zo ver' weel' babboon put Raleigh County in his pocket and run off with it in broad daylight! Taken us right to Richmond, too, I reckon, if we hadn't been such a set of simpletons Jeffy couldn't make any use of us! 'Veel zee Nort' vight?' Oh, hell! Fight? We haven't sense enough to know which is the business end of a gun, or whether it should be loaded with caraway seed or egg custard! Oh, shucks!"

"Shucks!" was Judge Gildersleeve's expression for supreme disgust.

"Umph! And now that they are organized to murder their neighbors, browbeat and terrorize women and children, and lend a helping hand to 'zee zo ver' fin' Gov-ee-men' oov Mees-taire—ah, Da-vees,' I suppose these fellows, these—er——"

"Why not call them *Copperheads*, Judge Gildersleeve?" interrupted the young lawyer, amused at the Judge's wrath and inability to find just the word he wanted.

"Copperhead? Copperhead?" The Judge mused a mo-



ment, flicked a bit of dust from the lapel of his coat, took a fresh morsel of fine-cut, and then slowly said:

"*I doggie*, Sammy, that's a stroke of genius! Copperhead's just the word," musingly. Then: "Copperhead—*species*, contortrix; *genus*, ophidia—tongue long, slender, bifid—ovoviviparous—that is, eggs hatched in body of parent—sulphur-brown—fangs *concealed*—connect with gland filled with *deadly poison*—forces the poison along the fang into the wound—strikes, repeating the blow as often as possible—*malignant*—prefers dark places—Southern States and *northward*! Stroke of genius, I say, Sammy! And that name'll stick, too, and they won't like it, nary a bit; and won't they squirm and wriggle? Copperhead! Good! I propose that you be admitted to the degree of M. N.—Master of Nomenclature."

Then, more soberly, after a moment's reflection, "You've solved the mystery, Sammy, and named it correctly—*when it's too late*. If we'd only, *only*, known enough to've choked the gizzard out of that little skunk when he was here, and to have raised the alarm! But now I suppose they're organized everywhere. What a pity our foresight isn't equal to our hindsight!"

Judge Gildersleeve was right. In a few days the papers were teeming with accounts of a mysterious organization all over the North—"Knights of the Golden Circle"—having for its end and aim the destruction of the Union.

Its power and influence were soon apparent. Compactly organized by thousands, fear was gone, timidity had vanished, treason had become rampant, and a reign of terror had been inaugurated. Union men were openly insulted, sometimes beaten, occasionally murdered; everywhere were held in deepest detestation, were assailed with vilest epithets, and often were in greater peril than they would have been in the very heart of "Dixie." Vallandigham and Pen-

dleton, and later McClellan, were hailed as heroes, Lincoln was denounced as a tyrant, while the Government at Washington was declared to be an usurpation and a despotism—all openly and without reserve.

Another result of the new condition was an almost total cessation of enlisting, and this immediately became a matter of grave concern to the upholders of the Union. Death at the front was reaping its grim harvest and new men were constantly being needed to take their places; but under the pressure of the "Knights of the Golden Circle," new men were not forthcoming.

Hence the Government was under the necessity of sending out recruiting officers, "volunteers" having to be solicited, urged, exhorted, entreated. It was very humiliating to the Administration, but unavoidable.

Of course the "Copperheads" were in high glee, and promised to make it "interesting" for the recruiting officers—which they did. Only the coolest and bravest men were sent out by the Government, but often the most daring quailed, and some of them were killed. The conflicts between revenue officers and "moonshiners" in the mountains were only the interchange of polite courtesies compared with what many recruiting officers in Southern Illinois had to encounter.

In the latter part of the summer, Col. Henry Morton appeared in New Richmond and announced his mission.

"Must be tired of life," observed Joe Levering, believed to be a leading member of the Knights of the Golden Circle; and indeed it was no idle jest, for the recruiting officer was courting death. Judge Gildersleeve, whose loyalty now was unquestioned, frankly counseled the Colonel to "throw up the sponge"; and even old Amsden, bulldog that he was, did not see that Colonel Morton could do anything except "furnish business for the undertaker."

Colonel Morton had arrived on the noon stage from Enochsburg, and had been invited by the young lawyer, to whom he had a letter of introduction, to dinner; after dinner, while yet a stranger to the people of New Richmond, he had met Judge Gildersleeve and Amsden Armentrout at the offices of Gildersleeve & Simonson. After listening to the Judge's and the blacksmith's forebodings, Colonel Morton said he would go out and reconnoitre a little—make a tour of the public square—not that it would at all affect his resolution to remain, but to obtain information. The young lawyer offered to accompany him, but the Colonel preferred to go alone. He went after "information"—and *he got it*.

Hiram Goldbeck informed him that his presence was a menace to the peace and order of the community, and that if he would take the next stage out of town he would immediately "hand over one hundred dollars." Coöperate with him? Secretly, yes; openly, no! He had too much at stake.

Voe Bijaw ordered him out of his office.

Hank Gordon, the postmaster, said, "Foh God's sake, git out'n heah's fast ez yo' laigs'll kerry yuh! W'y, Ah'm holdin' thiz air orfus ut thuh par'l o' muh loife!" He was secretary of the local lodge of the Knights of the Golden Circle.

Frothingay and Bascom, the two leading clergymen, told him he was "a deceiver and an anti-Christ."

Dr. Boynton said: "Recruiting soldiers for Abe Lincoln's Nigger Government, are you? You ought to be hung, and *I'll furnish the rope!* If President Davis 'll send a recruiting officer, I'll help *him* all I can. Get out of my office, you sniveling cur!"

Colonel Morton quietly replied, "We shall have some very important business with you shortly," and walked out.



Ham Singleton, winking at Nic Tutwiler, remarked to a group of bystanders that he'd "furnish tuh tah ef thoid fuhnish tuh futhus." The Colonel was neither blind nor deaf, but quietly passed on.

Abner Wilcox said: "Colonel, this community's a hornet's nest. You'd better not stir it up. If you do, you're likely to get *stung*," and went out to draw a jug of sorghum for Edythe Fernleaf, the grass-widow.

Finally he went to the hotel to engage board. To say the least, Nic was terse and to the point: "Thiz heah tuvuhn's foh w'ite folks," and proceeded to take another generous cargo of "dawg-laig," his favorite brand of "chawin' ter-backy."

"But, Mr. Tutwiler," expostulated the recruiting officer, "isn't this a public house?"

"Unly foh w'ite folks. Yuh maw mus' be uh-lookin' foh yuh. Guiass yuh'd baituh buh uh-gwine."

"But, Mr. Tutwiler," the Colonel now thoroughly amused, "if I can't stop with you, what's to become of me? Yours is the only hotel in town."

"Doan' know. Ams Ahmintrout mout tuk yuh in. He's powh'ful fond uh niggers."

Sure enough, good old Ams did take him in.

Judge Gildersleeve offered Colonel Morton hospitality as soon as he learned the situation, as did several other gentlemen. Even Joel Levering, though an uncompromising Secessionist, swore like a pirate when told how Tutwiler had insulted a stranger.

"George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Wellington, yo' black rascal," he stormed at a negro whom he had freed before leaving Kentucky, but who had refused to be parted from his bluff old master, "hitch th' gray fillies tuh th' buggy an' git'm 'roun' heah tuh th' fron' doah en three

shakes uv uh sheep's tail. Doan' stan' thah grinnin' ut meh!"

Ten minutes later he came storming into the Judge's office.

"Colonel Morton," on being introduced, "Ah've come down, suh, in thuh name o' New Richmond, tuh 'pologize t' yuh, suh, foh thuh outrageous manneh yo' wuh treated, suh, ut th' tevuhn. Nic Tutwiluh's uh crackeh, jus' po' w'ite trash, suh, an' doan' know w'at ut is tuh b' uh gentleman. Think yo'h in uh damn' po' biznis, suh, but w' woan' talk about that. Ah'll feel m'sulf honoh'd, suh, 'f yuh'll mek The Gables, muh humble abode, yo' home as long as yuh may be pleased t' remain en New Richmond, suh."

Colonel Morton thanked him for his courtesy, but declined the invitation on the ground that he had already accepted other hospitality.

That night the "Knights" met, in session extraordinary, at the residence of Dr. Boynton. They were "honored" by the presence of "Col." David Ripley, whose "fort" was just over in Zebulon County, sixteen miles east of New Richmond. It was the sense of the meeting that the time had come to *strike*, and to strike *hard*. No "nigger-wuh-shpun'" Government should be permitted boldly to come and openly persuade Raleigh County young men to fight against the Confederate States of America. "If need be, and the necessity may be close at hand, we must not shrink from bravely meeting armed invasion and insolent subjugation in New Richmond, just as our fathers now are doing yonder under the glorious leadership of our peerless President, Jefferson Davis." "Colonel" Ripley promised to hasten to his "fort" near Thyratira, despatch messengers to Zoar, the county seat, and rally the chivalrous Knights as soon as possible. In a week they could count on his presence in New Richmond—"with *reënforcements*." The meeting was

opened and closed with prayer, the Reverends Frothingay and Bascom officiating.

Late that night Judge Gildersleeve, who had retired early, was awakened and summoned to the door. His late caller was Dr. Boynton.

Seated in the parlor, Dr. Boynton said: "Judge Gildersleeve, I want a little legal information, and have come to you *solely* because you are the best-informed lawyer in New Richmond. Please understand that I'm not here as your friend, for I'm not, as you're not mine. I'm a Rebel; you're a Unionist—that constitutes us enemies. Oh, nothing personal, Judge, nothing personal. You're a Virginian; I'm a Kentuckian—hence we're both gentlemen. As a Rebel, you'd like to shoot me, and I know of no gentleman by whom I'd rather be killed; and, sir, I flatter myself that you entertain a like respect for me; as I, before I would see our liberties destroyed, would consent to your accession to the Choir Invisible, and would render, however regretfully, whatever assistance my poor hand might be able to render to accomplish that end. I think we understand each other, Judge Gildersleeve?"

Judge Gildersleeve, unsmiling, bowed assent.

"Will you shake hands with me, Judge?"

Virginia and Kentucky clasped hands.

"Now, sir," resumed Dr. Boynton, "I will state my business, and I shall expect to pay you as I would pay any other stranger. I want to know if, by certain remarks I made to a certain Colonel Morton this afternoon, I have jeopardized my life or liberty, or both."

"Will you kindly state what you said, Dr. Boynton, and all the circumstances?" Judge Gildersleeve already had Colonel Morton's statement.



Dr. Boynton and Colonel Morton were in perfect agreement.

"Dr. Boynton," began the Judge, gravely, "you're liable to arrest and imprisonment, though in no peril of your life. I say, *liable* to arrest and imprisonment; as to whether you *will be* arrested and imprisoned, well—only Colonel Morton himself can answer. In time of war, the military often displaces all local authority—legislative, executive, and judicial. Colonel Morton is here acting under orders from the President direct; undoubtedly he is clothed with very large discretionary power and authority; were he to conclude that your presence at large in this community would embarrass him in the discharge of his duty, or were a menace to the Federal Government, or to the peace of the community, he doubtless has authority to arrest you and imprison you. As to whether he will exercise that authority, I, of course, am unable to say."

"And your advice, Judge Gildersleeve?"

"I would see Colonel Morton immediately and make the *amende honorable*."

"As a gentleman, Judge Gildersleeve, I'm willing to follow your advice—understand me, purely as a gentleman; but do you suppose Colonel Morton is a *gentleman*, and that he would be able to *understand*, and would be willing to accept an apology, leaving politics out—just as from one gentleman to another gentleman? For, as a *gentleman*, I'm sorry I insulted him; but as a Kentuckian and a Rebel, I'd rather die, sir, than retract a single word."

The Judge urged him to see Colonel Morton at once, but cautioned him to carefully guard his speech. Dr. Boynton finally concluded he would never, "so help him God," grovel before a "Lincoln hireling," and so moodily returned home, not without a vague feeling, however, that there was trouble in store for him.

About the same hour Dr. Boynton was conferring with Judge Gildersleeve at The Maples, Simonson, yet busily engaged in his office, was startled by a crash of pebbles against his window. Opening the window, he saw, in the dim starlight below, the outline of a woman. Without waiting for him to speak, the woman said, in a low voice: "Leave your light burning and come down quickly. You must see me home. I am frightened—come, *quickly!*" He instantly recognized his nocturnal visitor by her **voice**. It was *Vergie Culpepper*.

Marveling at the unexpected call, and wondering what cause had brought her to his office at that hour, he put on his hat, quickly descended, and found her waiting for him at the foot of the stairs on the opposite side of the building whence she had called.

Without speaking, she took his arm and they turned at once toward The Elms. "Please don't talk, and don't ask me to raise my veil," she whispered. "It would never do for us to be recognized—together."

He bowed his head, marveling all the more at her mysterious manner. They walked on, silently, toward her home. He could feel her strong, sinewy limbs, the pressure of her body, the touch of her hand, and could smell the perfume rising from her hair. What was there about Vergie Culpepper—the *spell* that she wove about every one that came into her presence? Whatever it was, he felt it now. It thrilled him. He resisted it, but could not throw it off. So perfectly formed, so lithe, so—*vital!*

He didn't love her; he told himself so, and yet—— He almost wished she wouldn't touch him, would take her hand off his arm—as the opium-eater wishes some one would remove from before him the delicious drug he feels himself unable to resist. He devoutly wished that she were less tempting—her eyes, her waist-line, the splendor of her com-

plexion, her hair—wished it as the man, filled wineglass in hand, wishes the rare Chianti were less powerfully alluring and seductive.

They had reached the entrance to The Elms—not the front entrance, but one of the side entrances nearer the house, in a dense copse of maple trees.

“Stop, Mr. Simonson,” she said. “You may return from here. After to-night you will not respect me, but—well, I couldn’t help myself. It was unmaidenly to go on the street at night, unattended, and to a man’s office, and from without to call to him, and—and—but it wasn’t that. I *had* to see you.”

She now had lifted her veil. “Mr. Simonson, once I did you a great wrong. I was punished for it, and it almost cost me my life. You were not to blame—you were innocent—and yet you were to blame. It was that Fourth of July night when you were talking to Felix Palfrey, and I wanted—You remember the time?

“And while I was ill—oh, so long—I promised God that if the opportunity should ever come to me, I would make reparation to you. And to-night the opportunity has come. Are you following me?”

The young lawyer indicated that he understood.

“Follow me closely, then. To-night, at Dr. Boynton’s, the Knights of the Golden Circle met—don’t—don’t interrupt me! But listen closely, for I must go in a moment.”

She was now pressing close to the young lawyer, gripping his arms; her face close to his face; her whispered breath on his cheeks, in his eyes, mingled in the air he breathed.

“When Papa came home, I heard him tell Mama all about it. I was in the adjoining room, and the door was ajar. Am I a base woman to tell you all this? Look in my face and there read the truth: that I am a virgin; that I have never defiled my vestalhood. My eyes know no shame, no



matter into whose eyes I look, for every moment of my life I have preserved my honor inviolate—not always easily done, for am I not comely? And I am truthful—no Culpepper ever told a lie.

“But to-night—oh, yes, to-night the Knights met at Dr. Boynton’s. Coloney Ripley’s gone to call the Knights to arms. They mean to kill the officer that’s come to recruit soldiers, and they mean to *attack the Government*. Some of them may come to-night. The soldier may be dead—*now*. Ripley’s to report to Dr. Boynton; everything’s in Boynton’s hands. But if you’d do anything, you must act quickly—*to-night!*”

“There! Have I made reparation? ‘Am I a traitress? If so, it’s for your sake, *Sammy!* Do you really hate me—*now?*’”

She was very close to him, and as she spoke she pleadingly lifted her hands and arms as if in supplication.

Instantly he embraced her, not lightly, nor daintily, nor caressingly, but roughly, fiercely, with the tumultuous passion of a strong man unable to longer resist; and she, with a like virility and vitality, long restrained, impelled by a mighty inrush of fiery passion inherited from Indian ancestors, utterly yielded herself to the tempest which she could not resist.

For a fleeting moment, an indefinable instant, he felt limb answering to limb, body to body, lips to lips, fiery passion to fiery passion: an instant that burned a gash down through the very core of his being—a gash volcanic, that could never be erased or forgotten; the one and only such moment that possibly comes to every man’s life, which no man for the world would have repeated nor for the world would have omitted—and then no less fiercely she disengaged herself and whispered:

“Go! Go quickly! And—~~for~~give—” Her voice trailed

into silence with a sob as she vanished in the darkness as noiselessly as her Indian ancestress, Zohanozoheton, Herald of Dusk and Dawn, in the long ago, doubtless had oft glided among the forest and mountain shadows.

Fifteen minutes later a rider, disguised as a common farm-hand, might have been seen speeding westward on horseback. But little more than an hour later the same rider might have been seen in the telegraph office at Enochsburg. Had one looked over his shoulder, he would have seen that the message he was writing was addressed to "Ezra Unkmyer, Provost Marshal, Onsted, Illinois." The careful observer would have seen other messages despatched to Abraham Lincoln, care of the Secret Service, Washington, D. C., and to Judge Advocate General Holt, same address. The careful observer likewise would have heard the sender of these various despatches reading to the alert telegrapher the statute relative to the penalty—fine and imprisonment, the one large and the other long—for writing, relating, or in any way, direct or indirect, disclosing the contents of any telegram offered, or accepted, for transmission, or for revealing, except to the constituted authorities, the identity of any sender, or receiver, of any telegram, message, or despatch whatsoever. And the rider and the writer were one and the same person—Samuel Simonson.

A little before noon the following day, New Richmond was profoundly shaken, as it rarely has been since, and never had been before, by the arrival of the United States Provost Marshal, the Provost Marshal's arrest of Leroy Boynton, M. D., and the immediate departure of the said Leroy Boynton, M. D., in irons, and heavily guarded, to Cleopas, one hundred miles distant, to be tried for one of the gravest of crimes—*treason*.

## CHAPTER XIX

HUGH GRANT AND THE RECRUITING OFFICER—LOGAN

**B**UT if Vergie could vow her unswerving fidelity to Vesta, the young lawyer could affirm a like loyalty to Vesto, and in that supreme moment of mutual conquest and self-surrender, it seemed to him that of all men he was most to be envied.

It is said the heart sleeps an instant between each throb and the one succeeding, the only rest it ever has between the valves of birth and death, but in those infinitesimal moments revels in all of rest's recuperation and exhilaration. So to the young lawyer it seemed that in the single moment he had felt the fierce pressure of Vergie's body, then the utter yielding of herself, compliant as a confiding and weary child, he had drunk Life's deepest draught, had experienced an *aeon* of immeasurable bliss.

If there be a love that springs from the primal passion, a mate hunger more imperious than bread hunger, a sex longing pure and undefiled as a mother's prayer and no less lawful than the higher spiritual love Marjorie always inspired in him, it did not occur to the young lawyer now. He only knew that every fibre, every tingling nerve, was in a glorious tumult; and he had no doubt but the raptures he felt would continue forever, only to increase and intensify by infinite progressions when he had made her his **Very Own** at the marriage altar.

Thus he had sped on his wild night ride to Enochsburg to summon the Provost Marshal from Onsted to New Rich-



mond, and then back to New Richmond to make ready for any possible effort that might be made to prevent Boynton's arrest and removal to Cleopas. Fortunately, however, there was no interference, not even on the part of the belligerent Knights of the Golden Circle—*such is the majesty of the law*. Besides, there was something in the stern countenances of the Provost Marshal and the recruiting officer that awed into acquiescence those who witnessed the Doctor's arrest and immediate removal. Colonel Morton, with the consent of the Provost Marshal, forbade the young lawyer to have any participation whatever in the matter.

Later in the day, when it became generally known that Dr. Boynton had been arrested by "a minion of the tyrannical Nigger Government at Washington," and was being taken in irons to Cleopas, there were loud threats of pursuit and forcible rescue; and several of the Mule Creek Gang, chancing to be in New Richmond, threatened to make a bonfire of the town. But their wrath was quelled by many long and deep potations of strong liquor, and by night even the valor of their mouths had subsided.

The effect of Dr. Boynton's prompt arrest was exceedingly wholesome, so far as outward respect for the law was concerned, though it greatly enraged and quickened the activities of disloyal organizations—for it must be remembered that the Knights of the Golden Circle had blood of the same ilk as that of the Provost Marshal and the recruiting officer, were just as conscientious, and were equally brave and self-sacrificing—indeed, not infrequently took greater risks than the officers of the law were accustomed to take.

An office was rented by Colonel Morton, "Old Glory" was flung to the breeze, and the citizenry were invited to step forward and enroll their names on "Glory's deathless page"; but the response was anything but encouraging to

the lovers of the Union. After a month's hard work, Colonel Morton confessed that he was making but little progress; only a few had enlisted.

"They are good men, Simonson," Colonel Morton said one day to the young lawyer, "but don't you see their names attract no more attention than so many telegraph poles or fence posts; though they are brave and true, and I cannot speak too highly of their courage and patriotism, yet, in a way, their names on our roster are a downright injury to us—can't you see?"

"Now, if we could have headed our list with, say, Fred Gildersleeve; then followed with the names of Albert Levering and Hugh Grant, and several others from like prominent and influential families, why, they'd have come flocking like a drove of sheep. But as it is—oh, well, there's simply nothing doing.

"Another thing, Simonson," Colonel Morton continued, "a change is coming over the community; it's becoming more like it was when I came here a month ago. They're recovering from the scare and check they had when Dr. Boynton was arrested and taken to Cleopas, and daily are becoming bolder and more defiant. Now my mail is full of taunts and threats, and even on the streets I'm no longer allowed to go unmolested. Insulting remarks are made as soon as I appear, and even a woman hissed as I passed her yesterday in front of Frazier & Leadbetter's harness shop—that Edythe Fernleaf, the grass-widow."

"She was only whistling, Colonel," the young lawyer laughingly replied. "Thought you were fond of music, especially the soft, sweet sighing of the aeolian harp!"

"All right, Simonson; have it your way; but let's get down to tacks. I'm not sure of the wisdom of Logan's coming here this week. It's already raising hell, and of course when he gets here the very devil will be to pay.

Lawsy, Simonson, how he'll tan their jackets and hang their hides on the fence to dry! And they? Why, they've been whetting their teeth and grinding their finger-nails for two weeks, getting ready for him. In fact, they've begun practicing on me. Only last night a dozen of the Thompson Creek Terrors pushed me off the sidewalk into the mud and told me that that was the place for niggers; and as I was going home a bullet toyed with my earlock. This is only Tuesday; by the time Logan gets here Saturday I fear we'll have pandemonium—and a good many funerals."

The young lawyer wondered what he could do to promote the enlistment of soldiers for the Union army—that was the imperative necessity. Somehow his hope centered in Hugh Grant; if only he could get Hugh to make the break, he was certain that others of like prominence, and of equally influential families, would follow his example. Accordingly he hunted up Hugh and invited him to his office for a conference. But the young man was hardly lukewarm, though evidently he was thoughtful and troubled. After a little conversation, and a few arguments pro and con, the young man exclaimed:

"See here, Simonson, I'm not a coward—you know I'm not; and I'm not a conscienceless brute. And I'll say for your encouragement that I've made some progress since our last interview regarding this matter. Then I said I'd never enlist in the Union army without Father's consent. I've revised that, and it now reads, without Father's knowledge. If I'm brave enough to make a useful soldier, I'm brave enough, in case I make up my mind to join the Union army, to tell Father so; and, if he can hold down his temper, give him my reasons for coming to an independent conclusion, and going against him—besides, it's the manly thing to do.

"But, Simonson," he continued, "I'm not a highbrow like



you; and then—well, I'm deeper rooted in the Southern Confederacy than you are. There's hardly a Rebel down South but's uncle or cousin or something to me, and you know it's hard to fight your own flesh and blood. Still, I'd do it if I were fully convinced that they were in the wrong, and that my help was needed to put them right and save the Union."

Hugh Grant was a typical Southerner—brave, high-minded, whole-souled—and the young lawyer liked him immensely.

"Hugh," said the young lawyer, "let me give you a piece of advice."

"All right, Simonson."

"Go up to Colonel Morton's office and have a heart-to-heart talk with him."

"No, Simonson; he's a damned Yankee, a blue-bellied New England Roundhead, and I don't like the breed. Simonson, we'd have a fight in less than two minutes. I'm not interested in this struggle between the North and the South on account of the people. So far as the people are concerned, I like the Southern people *wrong* better than I like the sniveling, white-livered New England Abolitionists, even though they are in the right. If I fight at all, it must be for *principle*. No, Simonson, it wouldn't do any good for me to see Colonel Morton—he'd only rile me."

"Excuse me, Hugh," the young lawyer now earnestly pleaded, "but Morton's not a bad sort, even though he is a Vermont Yankee. I'm a Missourian myself; do you think I'd take any hypocritical claptrap from him? Why, Hugh, what you say, and the stand you take, is a reflection on me, old man! Come, let me take you up and introduce you to him, and then I'll clear out—*run over to the hospital and undertaker's and make all the necessary arrangements; get stretchers and coffins rigged up for immediate business.*"

"I'll not promise, Simonson. We Grants are pretty stubborn, you know, and you must give us time. But if I do see Morton, I'll go alone. Much obliged to you, Simonson, just the same; but in this matter I prefer to play a lone hand."

"Colonel Morton, this is the young man that called yesterday, and whom you desired to see if he called again."

"Ah, yes," said Colonel Morton, rising and extending his hand to the young man, at the same time signaling his aide to retire.

"Be seated, Mr. ——"

"Grant—Hugh Grant, sir."

"A relative of Jedediah Grant?" The recruiting officer was keenly eyeing his caller.

"Yes, sir. I'm Jedediah Grant's son."

The recruiting officer frowned. There was a glint of anger in his eyes. His fingers beat a tattoo on his desk. Evidently he was not in an amiable frame of mind. To Hugh it was also evident that the young lawyer had left him a clear field, and he liked him all the more for not "coaching" the recruiting officer.

"And what do you want to see me about, Mr. Grant?" The recruiting officer's voice was cold and metallic.

"Call me Hugh, sir. There's only one Mr. Grant. That's Father. But—I hardly know how to put it, Colonel Morton. In a word, I've come to you for information and advice."

Again Colonel Morton closely scrutinized his caller. Something in the young man's face appealed to him; there was the ring of sincerity in his voice. However despicable his principles might be, like his father, more than likely a rabid Secessionist, personally he was certainly a lovable young fellow.

"All right, Hugh; state your case."

"Well, it's this way. We Grants are Southerners—in fact, most of the Grants in this country are Southerners, with one very notable exception—U. S. Grant. Consequently, your mission in this neck of the woods, recruiting soldiers for the Northern army, is not, to say the least, exactly pleasing to the Grants."

"I have surmised as much, Hugh; and, since you have mentioned it, perhaps you can tell me who is working overtime to bring my mission to an abrupt and inglorious termination. Twice within a week I have been waylaid, and sundry leaden compliments have hailed me in the dark. Possibly you can shed some light on the question as to the identity of my would-be assassins." Again the Colonel's wrath was rising, for he had interpreted the young man's remark as a threat.

"Excuse me, Colonel Morton, I had not meant to speak of that."

"And why not? There's a well-grounded suspicion abroad that Jedediah Grant, your father, is implicated."

Instantly Hugh's face was livid with rage. "It's a damned lie! Whoever says my father waylaid you, or shot at you from ambush, or has in any way, directly or indirectly, interfered with you or your business, is a double-damned liar—you or anybody else!"

"Steady, young man. Don't go too fast. Remember, also, to whom you are speaking. I should dislike to order your arrest."

"Order *me* under arrest? Fire away if you want to! Order me under arrest, and be damned! Arrest me, and there'll be the hottest——"

"There, there, now! Enough of that. Possibly I have been misinformed."

"You *have* been misinformed, Colonel Morton, if you've been led to believe that my father'd be guilty of, or counte-



nance, anything cowardly or dishonorable. I confess that he's against you, teeth and toe-nails. He hates Abe Lincoln and the Abolitionists; he loves the South and everything the South stands for. He grieves because the wound he received at Cherubusco prevents him from fighting under the Stars and Bars. My father, sir, is a Copperhead, and is pretty free in expressing so-called 'Rebel' sentiments, but a braver or more honorable man never lived."

"I wish every young man could say as much for his father; and your instant and emphatic defense of him does great credit to your heart; but——" There was a long pause—then: "No matter now." The fiery young Southerner, so fearless, so reverent toward his father, had touched the heart of the weary and harassed recruiting officer.

For a month Colonel Morton had been sorely tried. He had been flouted on every hand. Had he been a leper, he could not have been more studiously avoided; or guilty of some heinous crime, he could not have been more openly shunned and loathed. His mission, too, had been a failure. But few had enlisted, and none of importance. The powerful families—Bretts and Radfords and Morgans and Races and Leeces and Goldbecks and Leverings—had held tauntingly aloof, and were thwarting him in every possible manner.

A certain Major Martin, ostensibly representing Keith, Farquar & Winslow, of New York, but really a Southern emissary, for more than a week had been in consultation with the leading men of the community.

To the Colonel's certain knowledge there were at least three strong Copperhead lodges in Raleigh County—one at Pewaumee, one at Fairhaven, and one at Squire Mulford's, on the Enochsburg Road.

His life was in constant jeopardy. Colonel Morton was

not lacking in courage, but silent opposition, an atmosphere of mystery, and repeated attempted assassinations were getting on his nerves.

But this young fellow, Hugh Grant, was open and above-board. Colonel Morton liked him. Even the young fellow's quick temper and profanity were pleasantly piquant and zestful. He reminded the Colonel of many splendid Southern cadets whom he had known and admired at West Point. His face relaxed. His eyes softened. His bearing became less rigid. Turning to his youthful visitor, he said:

"Hugh, how old are you?"

"Just past twenty-five, Colonel." He was a trifle puzzled by the recruiting officer's change of tactics.

"Where were you born?"

"At Charleston, South Carolina."

"And your parents?"

"Both South Carolinians. My father fought under old Zach Taylor, sir; and his father fought under General Jackson; and my great-grandfather fought under George Washington. And my blessed mother, sir, was a Rhett, and a great-granddaughter of Patrick Henry."

"And with such ancestry, Hugh, you want to turn 'Rebel' and fight the flag of your country?"

"You forget, Colonel, that there are *two* flags now, and that most of my people are fighting under the other flag; and you also forget that my great-great-grandfather, *Patrick Henry*, was something of a 'Rebel,' as were also several other rather reputable gentlemen, such as *George Washington* and *Thomas Jefferson*."

"And you, Hugh, where do you stand?" There were both anxiety and solicitude in the Colonel's voice; besides, he wanted to avoid an argument.

"That's just the question. If any man will make clear to me my duty, I'll do it, so help me God!"

"Ah, I can easily do that, my boy."

Colonel Morton instantly was conscious of the unwisdom of his reply. For the moment he had forgotten the difference between his view-point and Hugh Grant's—that, socially, temperamentally, and ancestrally, they were antipodal.

In a flash, too, he saw that his attitude and tone of voice were an insult to the young man and his people; and his heart went out in sympathy to the perplexed young fellow. Himself a Vermonter, sired and dammed by a long line of ardent patriots of the New England type, of course he was for Lincoln and the North; why should not Hugh, for reasons equally valid—a Southerner, a Grant-Rhett, descended from Patrick Henry, hearing only pro-Southern sentiments expressed, having only pro-Southern associations—in like manner be for Jefferson Davis and the South? He thought of the devout and scholarly Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson and Bishop-General Polk, and of the deep and unaffected religiousness of the South. Involuntarily, he condemned his hasty and cocksure speech.

"Excuse me, Hugh. We soldiers are a blunt sort. Besides, these are trying times. Now I want to thank you for coming to see me, and, if you'll allow me, I'd like to explain things as I understand them."

"Hell, Morton, what's the use?" Hugh was offended, as he had told the young lawyer he would be, and was both angry and disgusted.

"You forget my rank and title, young man," not unkindly.

"Damn your rank and title! You're only a man, and I reckon I'm as much; and as for title, I'm a *gentleman*. Can you beat that? Guess I'll be going." Hugh had almost reached the door.

"But hold on, Hugh. Really, I meant no offense. Anyway, let's have a friendly little chat. Here, have a cigar."



"No use, Colonel. You're just like Father and all the rest of the folks—you're all crazy, or dreamers, or fanatics—hotheads, every one of you. What I want is instruction, not declamation; a bunch of facts, not a string of unsupported eulogies or denunciations. See? Here's Reverend Frothingay—fine old chap as ever lived—praying for the South; and Reverend Beech, all wool and a yard wide, right across the street, whooping it up for the North. Here's Cap Noss, scurrying in every direction, drumming up men for the Northern army; and out yonder's Father, crazy mad because I don't rush right off before breakfast to fight on the other side. Old Daddy Updegraff says Abe Lincoln is all hunkedory, while good old Aunt Mariah, his wife, is shouting, even in her sleep, for Jeff Davis—and sometimes they almost come to blows. I may be a chump, Colonel Morton, but I'll be dodgasted seventy times seven before I'll go it blind. You *think* you're right, but that proves nothing. Father thinks *he's* right, but that proves nothing. It's all assertion, assertion, assertion. But I want *facts*, I tell you."

"And if you had the facts, Hugh, would you abide by them?"

"Yes, till—till hell froze forty feet deep, and Baldy Beelzebud, Esquire, became a Reverend and turned evangelist."

"Even if it meant to give up the South, and join the Union Army?"

"Everything, everything—except——"

"Well, go on, Hugh. Except what?"

"None of your infernal business."

Colonel Morton was laughing. He liked this breezy, honest, rugged, straightforward young Egyptian. He reminded him of what Lincoln must have been at his age, and Logan, and Tecumseh Sherman—abrupt, fearless, sometimes profane, but always modest, reliable, self-respecting.

"See here, Colonel, I like you, even if you are a damned Yankee, though I didn't think I would; and I don't mind telling you. I'm willing to go against all hell and damnation except—except Freda. Ever meet her?"

"No, Hugh. Tell me about her."

"Not much to tell, Colonel. Only she's a Levering, and she's got grit and gimp and 'gumption, fire and dash and ginger. She's a 24-karat, 16 hands high, mile in 57 seconds, thoroughbred." His eyes told the rest.

"And of course Union to the core."

"Hell, no—not on your faded old ambrotype! She's Rebel to the core, or I reckon she is. Didn't I tell you she's a Levering, a South Carolina Levering—do you understand? Just as you would say, a John Brown or a Wendell Phillips Abolitionist. *Understand?*"

Colonel Morton's countenance fell. He had seen Freda Levering. She was a wonderfully pretty girl of the Southern type. Young men by the score were in love with her, and—afraid of her; for to utmost gentleness in her were added an irresistible wit and brusquerie. Above all, she was a girl of decided opinions, as Hugh had told the young lawyer, and had the courage of her convictions—in fact, was brave to audacity. Hugh Grant could never side with the North against the wishes of Freda. Colonel Morton told him so.

"But hold on, Colonel," Hugh said. "You don't understand. Freda sent me to you. Simonson asked me first and I turned him down. But at the apple-cutting out at Floyd Monroe's last night Freda said: 'Hugh, do you understand what all this fuss is about?' 'No,' I answered. 'Then go to that Yankee recruiting officer,' she replied. 'Even if his ears don't match he may not be as ignorant and sap-headed as he looks. Anyway, he'll know their side of the quarrel. Let's not be ignorant, Hugh. Let's have the E-Pluribus-Unum, Stars-and-Stripes-Forever, Oh-Say-Can-You-See,

Abe-Lincoln version from first to last—facts, fancies, phantasies, vagaries, surmises, and so-called logical conclusions.’ And that’s why I’m here, Colonel. So now, Mr. Recruiting Officer, just fire away.”

Colonel Morton was abashed and nonplused. Here were an honesty and frankness and conscientiousness he had not anticipated, and a task he felt himself by no means competent to perform. As a Northerner he had taken everything for granted. He had been too prejudiced to read even the speeches of Hayne and Calhoun, of Davis and Stephens. But here were Hugh Grant and Freda Levering, of the bluest strains of Southern blood, imploring him to tell the Northern side of the controversy—and he saw that they were in deadly earnest. Slowly turning to his visitor he said:

“Hugh, I’m going to ask a favor of you, and—Freda. I’m going to ask you two to hear Logan tomorrow.”

“That renegade coyote who——”

“Easy, Hugh,” placing his hand on the young man’s arm. “I want you and Freda to hear General Logan. You say you want facts—he’ll give them to you, straight from the shoulder. He’ll make you mad, both of you, to the core—but I want you to hear him through. More than likely he’ll lift your hair, maybe your hide; it’s a way he has—but I want you to curb your temper and follow him with closest attention. They may try to mob him, somebody may shoot at him, it’s possible there will be a terrible riot; but don’t get excited—he’ll take care of himself. But listen to every word he says. He knows what he’s talking about. Logan himself is a lawyer, and a scholar, and is thoroughly informed. His father is a physician, and a fine old fellow. You want to do the right thing—so does Freda. You confess that you are confused. You have come to me for advice, and my advice



is for you and Freda to give Logan a fair and square hearing tomorrow. Will you do it, Hugh?"

Colonel Morton had spoken imploringly, and with deep unction. He felt it was a crisis in the young man's life, and in the patriotic history of Raleigh County. Hugh himself was deeply moved.

"Colonel Morton, I can't speak for Freda. She probably won't come, but I will."

"That's all I ask, Hugh."

## CHAPTER XX

### LOGAN'S SPEECH AT NEW RICHMOND

PROMPTLY at the appointed hour the imperturbable "Black Jack, Eagle of the Thirty-first," as his admirers proudly styled him, mounted the rude platform that had been erected in the court house campus. The most casual observer would have noted that the audience was intensely hostile. Only a born hero would have dared to face it, much less to speak his mind fully, without reservation or hesitation. The very air was electric, a-tremble, almost a-shudder, with ominous expectation and apprehension. Occasionally some one would shout, "Hooray for Jeff Davis!" Then others, "Down with the Lincoln hirelings!" "To hell with the G—d d—d nigger worshipers!"

Many men, dark-browed and scowling, openly wore revolvers and bowie-knives. One, bare-headed, a revolver in each hand, a bowie-knife held crosswise between his large obtruding tobacco-stained teeth, and a jingling spur on each boot, Jake Rindafer by name, forced his way through the crowd down to a front seat. His rude act and grotesque appearance excited neither laughter nor resentment. A score of dangerous men, desperadoes and Knights of the Golden Circle, under the leadership of Bill Snodgrass, champion bully, notorious ex-thief, penitentiary graduate and post-graduate, filed in and took places about the speaker's stand. They were all heavily armed. It was not known whether they meant to capture Logan, or kill him outright—probably

the latter. They all held their hands in their hip-pockets. The reason was obvious.

The effigy of a negro was let down from one of the court house windows; and presently, from another window, there was lowered an effigy of Logan. Each effigy had a rope about its neck. But though all this pantomime was in p'ain view of the audience there was no demonstration of regret or remonstrance—only grim silence.

Since early morning the weather had been threatening and now the rain fell in torrents—a tempestuous summer deluge. It rapidly grew very dark, and in the windows of the houses facing the court house square, yellow lights—primitive candles—began to gleam.

Then the wind intensified its fury, and the electrical storm became blinding and deafening. Flash after flash of lightning was followed by crash after crash of reverberating thunder—heavenly artillery—but no one moved.

The scene: The dauntless Logan, the man with a bowie-knife between his teeth, the horde of ruffians grouped about the speaker's stand, the dark-browed, scowling, murderous multitude, was worthy of the pen and pencil of a Greek dramatist; while the tempest, the yellow, flickering lights, the flashing lightning and the crashing thunder, the wail and moan of giant oak and elm and maple almost uprooted, and the lowering furious heavens, raging and writhing as if in quest of universal, primeval vengeance, furnished a *scenario* beyond the ordering of human wealth and genius.

But none moved. Scarcely an umbrella was raised. In the tense strain even timid women had suddenly developed nerves of steel.

A distant shot was heard, a near-by scream, a wild driverless team dashed into the public square, tore off one of the front wheels of the wagon at the post office corner, turned and plunged down Roanoke Street, and disappeared as



though clothed with wings and sped by lightning—a materialized dream from the world of pagan mythology.

In the wild excitement, intensified by the blinding gloom and the roar of the elements, one of the plunging, careening horses seemed to be headless, and the other to exhale fire—and that such was the case was currently reported for many years.

It was, indeed, like a lurid scene from Æschylus, or one of the mysterious portents said to have presaged the downfall of the Roman empire, or a blood-curdling spectacle conjured by the fabled spectres of the angered air, warning, *warning*, WARNING—but no one stirred.

All eyes now were riveted on the fearless political gladiator who had risen to address them.

Here and there a man shot a furtive, nervous glance over the crowd as if expecting to see a hundred, perhaps a thousand revolvers leveled at the speaker's head and heart—and then the tumult.

For days the air had been sulphurous with dark hints, and even open declarations, that if Logan dared to show his face in New Richmond he would not be permitted to speak, and now was the time to act—but no one moved.

Silent as sculptured Fate, statuesque as hewn and graven marble, apparently unbreathing as the dusty throat of an abandoned sepulchre, the prejudice-crazed, soon to be madly-infuriated, multi-bodied, uni-minded monster sat.

Hugh Grant and Freda Levering were present.

Presently the storm subsided and Logan, advancing to the front of the platform, began his address, an address destined to be renowned in the annals of forensic eloquence—for before the close of the day he had won hundreds of Egypt's brightest and noblest sons to the Union.

But now there was no omen of victory—naught but gan-

greded prejudice, maddened, maniacal, and driven to its last retreat.

"Fellow Citizens!"

Logan paused to note the effect. His long, black, straight, abundant Indian-like hair reached to his shoulders; his massive jet-black drooping mustache but half concealed his resolute mouth and leonine jaw; his raven-black eyes, keen as an eagle's, piercing as a javelin of light deflected from an Arab's scimitar, swept the audience fearlessly, defiantly; his voice, like the clarion call of a king's trumpeter, far-reaching, all-embracing, rang out without shadow or suspicion of trembling or timidity.

So Jove, or Thor, or Ajax, or Hercules might have stood, dared, thundered, hurled defiance, by his very mien smitten his enemies with terror or aroused his followers to deeds of fiendish fury and destruction. Swarthy, agile, intrepid, arrayed in a Major-General's uniform, there was about him the air of mastery, of a tremendously vital personality, of a regnant indomitable spirit. In ancient times, the worthwhile days of Greece and Rome, he would have been worshiped as a god.

Out of the death-like hush there came a hiss, keen, dagger-like, hurtling. Not often do men thus hiss, they *cannot*; for the keenness and piercingness are born of the hatred and fury that inspire it, and are always in exact proportion to the tenseness and terribleness of the potential hatred and fury; and now the sabre-like thrust of the hiss was all the more penetrating on account of the psycho-electrical storm in the air, and the tiptooness and quiviveness of ominous fear and expectation.

Again the hiss slashed and slivered the silence, but none moved or looked around. Even Logan looked neither to right or left. While the second hiss was seething and tor-

turing its way through the air he slowly and deliberately said:

"There are many breeds of reptiles"—giving the "i" the long sound. "When I was soldiering in Mexico we passed through a certain valley that fairly swarmed with a reptile, a cross between a scorpion and a tarantula, vile, vicious, hideous, terrible, with a peculiarly loathsome odor, and a damnably wicked hiss. Flatheads and blue-racers are common breeds. But this is a new kind of sibilance; but, believe me, I recognized it instantly. I have been hearing it down about Sardis, and Rapidan, and Eutopolis, and Minerva, and Cleopas, and Athens, ever since—I was about to say ever since the Lincoln-Douglas debate; the Lincoln who is now, by the grace of God, and the sovereign will of a great liberty-loving, Union-adoring people, President of the *United States*, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. I say I instantly recognized the vile reptile that has just hissed twice. It is a damn Copperhead, the vilest, slimiest, damnablest beast or reptile ever vomited out of the bottomless pit of hell."

Logan's eyes gleamed like coals of fire but his voice was intensely calm, and he made no gestures.

"Brave as a lion," Hugh whispered; Freda smiled and nodded.

Instantly there was a fierce, spasmodic clutching of revolvers and bowie-knives, but Logan went on without seeming to note the increased fury his audacious words were kindling.

Presently there came another hiss, long-drawn, insistently and increasingly insolent, and murderous—as of a rattlesnake when about to strike. Then a dozen, score, hundreds!

The speaker's voice was overborne by the tumult; and the mob, surging yet closer to the platform, formed an unescapable cordon about him. It now was evident that an



assault had been planned, and that everything was moving forward as prearranged. When at last able to make himself understood Logan said:

"I despise your hisses; neither have I any respect for your contemptible methods and tactics.

"To you who thus deliberately seek to insult me, the uniform I wear, and the sacred Cause I represent, I wish to say that I neither fear or respect you. You are beneath the contempt of a nigger, or dog, or hottentot, or orang-outang. I wouldn't so much as spit on you.

"For decent, respectable Rebels down South who have the courage of their convictions I have the highest consideration. They are wrong, damnably wrong, but they honestly think, however mistaken—it is born in the blood, and bred in the bone—that they have a righteous cause; and they are out in the open fighting for it with the high-born valor of gods and heroes, just as they fought in Mexico, and in the various wars we've had with England and the Indians. I myself have felt their steel and they have felt mine, and, by G—d, we respect one another. But for you poltroons, mountebanks, guerillas, sneak-thieves, Knights of the Golden Circle, cowardly egg-sucking curs——"

There was now an avalanche of hisses, and an ominous lunge toward, and closing in about, the platform. Men held their weapons in readiness, and eyes glared with a hatred that boded ill for the unsparing speaker. But Logan remained calm and undaunted.

"If the men whom you eulogize——"

"Hooray for Jeff Davis!" "Hooray for good old Bobby Toombs!" "Hooray for the Southern Confederacy!"

Bedlam had turned loose. A riot seemed inevitable. Had some one fired a shot the result would have been terrible. There was only lacking a leader with sufficient courage and daring.

"Damned outrage," was Hugh's comment.

"Keep still, Hugh," was Freda's reply. "Guess Logan can take care of himself."

After a space of ten minutes Logan was again able to make himself heard, though still the confusion was great.

"I was just saying that if the men whom you eulogize—Jeff Davis, Toombs, Stephens, General Lee—knew by what a mangey, lousy, lop-eared pack of cowardly cusses, white-livered renegades, and disreputable poltroons and mountebanks up North their cause is being championed they would hang their heads in shame, and pray to be delivered from such an accursed and disgraceful set of cut-throat abettors and supporters."

"It's a damned lie," rang out from the white lips of Dr. Culpepper, standing by a tree about twenty feet from the rostrum. "I say it's a lie, a G— d— lie, and you know it is, you G— d— Lincoln hireling."

Instantly Logan seized a heavy goblet and hurled it at the Doctor's head. The aim was accurate but the Doctor dodged and the flying goblet struck Col. David Ripley—almost a fatal blow. The "Commandant of Fort Ripley" fell unconscious, with a deep gash in his forehead. Logan's quick and fearless act for a moment awed the crowd into silence.

"I'm going to my room. I shall return in a moment." Logan leaped from the platform and crossed to the hotel on the west side of the square, just back of Joel Race's store.

Bill Snodgrass and his Mule Creek gang followed; also several others, including the "desperado" with two spurs, a revolver in each hand, and a bowie-knife between his teeth.

When Logan descended from his room and stepped out on the sidewalk he found his way blockaded, and was greeted with a storm of curses and hisses. A dozen or more men had their revolvers drawn and cocked. A less brave and

resolute man would have been daunted—but not Logan. But not a moment was to be wasted, for they were crowding in upon him. Lifting his hand, he said:

“Are there any boys here who love the Union, and are willing to die for the Old Flag? If so let them stand here against this wall by my side.”

A dozen men, most of them disabled soldiers at home on furlough, responded.

Then advancing a step and facing them, Logan said: “I’ve fought Rebels down South, and I’m now ready to fight Rebels up North. Do you hear me? Then take warning. I’m going to count three; and if, at the expiration of the third count, one of you damn cowardly galoots remains I shall order my men to fire. Do you understand? Very well.”

Logan began to count.

Instantly there was a mad, wild shuffling. Bill Snodgrass and the valorous Knights fled precipitately. The bareheaded “desperado” with the long spurs, the two revolvers, and the bowie-knife in his mouth, rushed toward Slattan’s emporium. Long-limbed and coatless he looked like a huge ambling spider. In less than sixty seconds all the “Terrors,” and “Ripsnorters” had disappeared.

Returning to the platform Logan again faced the crowd and, laying two huge revolvers before him on the table, quietly remarked, “I *trust* I shall not be interrupted again.” Nor was he.

Hugh and Freda looked at each other and smiled. Logan’s sarcasm and heroism had appealed to them. Mind and heart now were ready to receive the message. Colonel Morton saw the expression on their faces and inwardly smiled. To himself he murmured, “Oh, this is glorious.”

*Logan was victor.*

The speech that followed was mainly historical. Hur-



riedly he gave an account of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States, and the difficulties attending its adoption by the various Commonwealths.

Lucidly he explained the unique character and prerogatives of the Federal Supreme Court.

He then discussed the drafting of the Kentucky Nullification Resolutions by Thomas Jefferson, which assumed for the States prerogatives belonging exclusively to the Federal Government.

Passing on he considered the untenable position taken by the Federalists fifteen years later, and the treasonous attitude of the Hartford Convention, pausing a moment to eulogize Clay and Madison.

Next he discussed the controversy between Jackson and the South Carolina Nullifiers. His New Richmond audience fairly idolized "Old Hickory," and he shrewdly showed them that his, Logan's, position, which was also Mr. Lincoln's position, was exactly the position of Washington, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson, and, in fact, of most of the framers and fathers of the National Constitution.

With finest strategy he then proceeded to show that Jackson was right, and that Calhoun and his co-Nullifiers were wrong—"Jackson said, 'treasonously wrong.'"

Then, to clinch the argument, he quoted Jackson's very words:

"The states severally have not retained their entire sovereignty. It has been shown that in becoming parts of a nation, not members of a league, they surrendered many of the essentials of sovereignty. The right to make treaties, declare war, levy taxes, exercise judicial and legislative powers, were all of them functions of sovereignty. The States then, for all these important purposes, were no longer sovereign. The allegiance of their citizens was transferred in the first instance, to the Government of the United States; they became American citizens and owed obedience to the

Constitution of the United States and to laws made in conformity with the powers it vested in Congress. How, then, can that state be said to be sovereign and independent whose citizens owe obedience to laws not made by it, and whose magistrates are sworn to disregard these laws when they come in conflict with those passed by another?"

The effect of Jackson's words, as quoted by Logan, was tremendous. Above all others did his hearers believe in Jackson. To them what Jackson said was both Law and Gospel. They were now leaning forward with absorbed attention. To them it seemed that Jackson himself was speaking. Again Logan read from Jackson's great Proclamation:

"Look on this picture of happiness and honor and say: '*We are citizens of America.*' And then add, if you can, without horror and remorse: 'This happy Union we will dissolve; this picture of peace and prosperity we will deface; this free intercourse we will interrupt; these fertile fields we will deluge with blood; the protection of that glorious flag we renounce; the very name of Americans we discard.' But the dictates of a high duty oblige me to solemnly announce that you cannot succeed. The laws of the United States must be executed. I have no discretionary power; my duty is emphatically pronounced in the Constitution. Those who told you that you might peaceably prevent their execution deceived you; they could not have been deceived themselves. They know that a forcible opposition could alone prevent the execution of the laws, and they know that such opposition must be repelled. Their object is disunion. But be not deceived by names. Disunion by armed force is *treason*. Are you ready to incur its guilt? If you are, on the heads of the instigators of the act be the dreadful consequences; on their heads be the dishonor; but on your's may fall the punishment. Your government cannot accede to the mad project of disunion. Its First Magistrate cannot, if he would, avoid the performance of his duty. The consequences must be fearful."

"Does Old Hickory say that?"

It was Zed Cummins of Troas speaking. Zed was a South

Carolinian. His great shock of snow-white hair, and massive shoulders, had attracted Logan's attention before he began speaking; and he had ascertained his name, and the state of his nativity. His face was disfigured by an ugly wound received in a duel. "Does Old Hickory say that?"

"Yes, Zed Cummins," replied Logan. "And he said more than that. He said some things that ought to appeal to you. You and Andrew Jackson, one of the greatest and noblest men that ever lived, were born in the same state—in the Waxhaw settlement. Both of you are South Carolinians. On both sides your people came from Ireland. If you've become a damned Copperhead it's too bad. You've come from too good stock to be mixed up with these cowardly white-livered Knights of the Golden Circle. Your mother was a Rutledge, and her mother was an Abercrombie—and in their veins flowed the blood of the two houses that gave to the world Robert Emmet and Sallie Curran. And you down here in Southern Illinois doing the devil's dirty work! Zed Cummins, I'm ashamed of you. But hear what Jackson still further says:

"'There is yet time to show that the descendants of the Pinckneys, the Sumters, the Rutledges, and of the thousands of other names which adorn the pages of your Revolutionary history will not abandon that Union to support which so many of them fought and bled and died. I adjure you, as you honor their memory, as you love the cause of freedom to which they dedicated their lives, as you prize the peace of your country, the lives of its best citizens, and your fair fame, to retrace your steps. Declare that you will never take the field unless the Star Spangled Banner shall float over you!'"

Thus on and on the dauntless Logan read till he had completed the entire Proclamation; then, slowly folding it and looking the audience squarely in the face, he solemnly added:



"This day is the Gospel of Law, of Honor, and of Patriotism, according to Saint Andrew Jackson, fulfilled in your sight."

No priest could have spoken with greater unction, and Uncle Wick Haxey and good old Aunt Pop, who were seated on the platform, reverently responded: "A — — *men!*"

The introduction of Jackson's name, and the reading of his Proclamation, were masterfully strategic, and in the highest sense dramatic. They, with Logan's comments, were an unanswerable argument, save to those, like Dr. Culpepper, who were undivorcably wedded to the South. Logan's hearers, misinformed but big-hearted, now showed their best side; as, earlier in the day, they had shown their worst. Cheer upon cheer rang out, and the enthusiasm of the people was boundless. Demosthenes, perhaps, never achieved a greater immediate triumph.

But there were yet a few malcontents, one of whom yelled: "W'at about thuh nigger?"

It was a distinct appeal to prejudice, and was meant to destroy the effect of the great speech now coming to an irresistible conclusion. Hugh Grant thought the asking of it, especially at that time, an outrage. An orator less gifted, or less informed, would have gone amuck. But Logan was equal to the emergency.

Going back to the Constitutional convention, he showed that all the colonies, save two, disfavored slavery, as did the immortal Washington. Two states, however, Georgia and South Carolina, stood out. But none doubted but slavery, even without legal abolition or prohibition, was doomed; and but for the invention of certain devices, notably Whitney's cotton gin, that made the culture of cotton enormously profitable, slavery probably long since would have passed away.

He then showed that slavery had been a constant menace to the morals of both whites and blacks; and that, commer-

cially and industrially, the net result of slavery had been to degrade white labor, and the poor whites socially, till the despicable cognomen of "po' white trash" had come to be applied to *all* non-slaveholders. It was the *argumentum ad hominem*, et-tu Brutically applied, with a colossal historic perspective.

The very people whom Logan was addressing were mainly of the class denominated, even by the "niggers" who despised them, "po' white trash." They had come to the North to escape the deadly blight of a bitterer bondage, these Anglo-Saxons, and of a crueller despotism—crueller *because* they were Anglo-Saxons—than any bondage or despotism the negro had ever known.

In Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, the Carolinas, and the Gulf states, they had found themselves outclassed socially, worse off domestically and financially, and in every way more hampered and less favored than the "niggers" whom they had both envied and despised. Better far and happier the lot of the sable servitors of the mansion in those days than that of the non-slaveholding "po' white trash," even though they were blue-eyed, fair-faced Anglo-Saxons, and nominally free.

For the negro, labor was respectable, honorable; but for them, "the po' white trash," labor was a disgrace, a badge of ignominy.

They had seen negroes well-clothed, pampered, and decked and robed in livery of white and purple and gold, while they themselves were ragged, and hungry, and hopelessly unesteemed.

"In short," said Logan, "Slavery has starved you, stripped you, disgraced you, expatriated you from your beloved Sunny Southland, been a greater curse to you than all other evils combined—why, then, should you uphold the institution that has always been your persecutor, humiliator, *destroyer*?"

"But," Logan continued, "this war is not being waged for the negro; it is being waged for *you*; for your *Constitution*, for your *Government*, to maintain your inalienable *rights*, and *liberty* to work out in their entirety and accomplish the glorious dreams and purposes of Washington and Franklin, Hamilton and Marshall, Clay and Webster, and last but not least, of our own great and adorable Old Hickory—the immortal Andrew Jackson.

To Colonel Morton's and the young lawyer's great joy Hugh and Freda were won to the Union—*perforce*.

All their natural inclinations were the other way. They loved the South, their natal state, their kindred, their parents. It was hard to turn against the cause so dear to every Grant and Levering; and to espouse the principles of Lincoln and the North would be like leveling a sword at their hearts. But they now felt that South Carolina, however conscientious, was wrong; the South, however beautiful and high-souled and chivalrous, was in error; and the North, in its main great central contention, and herculean endeavor, was right.

The disgraceful scene, too, had profoundly moved them, more, perhaps, than even Logan's overwhelming facts, unanswerable arguments, and impassioned appeals. By heredity, instinct, training, and personal choice, they were knightly, honorable, valorous souls; hence the Southern sympathizers' treatment of Logan was, in their sight, an outrage—boorish, brutal, vulgar, disgraceful, scandalous. The audience, even the quoter and expounder of the odes and epodes of Horace, had been so unfair, illogical, narrow and fanatical, reckless and regardless of even the common amenities and decencies of life. Cast their lot with such people? Array themselves in opposition to such as Logan, and Lincoln, and Andrew Jackson, and George Washington? Impossible!



An hour later, in Logan's presence, and with Freda's benediction, Hugh Grant—the first of more than a hundred who enlisted that day—became a Union soldier. A week later he was assigned to a company that was being hurried to the front to reënforce Sherman.

## CHAPTER XXI

### HALCYON DAYS OF LOVE—A SEARCHING INQUIRY

THE young lawyer was in the anomalous predicament of a superbly virile young man absorbingly in love against his own choice and volition; a captive to a love at once mesmeric and tropically intoxicating, but not from the woman of his supreme desire, she, unhappily for him, being pledged to another; led on by a love that was lavished upon him without stint, and that colored and energized his entire being, yet always left him under a vague subconscious apprehension that the lethal, languorous heaven into which he had drifted, and to whose delicious thrill and thrall he had yielded, might at last prove to be unsatisfying, disappointing, even tragic.

But nothing could have surpassed Vergie's winsomeness and manner of loving. She had been called the Tigress, but now the appellation was wholly inapt, save her extraordinary liteness and bewildering beauty. On the other hand there was a sort of pathos in the completeness of her yielding to the first great passion she had ever known. So complete was her subjection to it, and so unquestioningly acquiescent was she to every desire of the one beloved, a less worthy lover might have been unduly emboldened. Not that she was lacking in those little arts of coquetry that come so naturally to women: simulated reluctance, momentary hesitation, the apparently fixed resolve never to grant the boon desired only to be followed by the tumultuous granting of all, and a little more—but never any concealment of the fact

that she had completely surrendered, in love and honor, to the man of her supreme delight.

Nor were there lacking those elements of difficulty that add zest and intensity to the ardors and delights of wooing. For many reasons the lovers could meet only clandestinely. That Simonson was in the service of the Federal Government was known only to Judge Gildersleeve, Amsden Armentrout, and the recruiting officer; and yet that he was in sympathetic coöperation with the supporters of the Administration was obvious to all. Hence for it to be blazoned abroad that he was in love with the daughter of the boldest and most thoroughly hated Copperhead in Raleigh County would have utterly discredited him in every way; he would have been sneered at as another Samson, hoodwinked and led astray by a woman's wiles, and she would have been rechristened "Delilah."

Vergie's position was even more critical. From the beginning her mother had disliked the young lawyer; and, with a woman's keen intuition, had discerned and declared him to be New Richmond's most dangerous man to the Confederate cause, a declaration which no one took seriously, least of all any member of her own family. The great sorrow that had come to her when Harold went away she had promptly charged to the young lawyer's account. As to the literal fact she was in error; and yet, in the main, she was not mistaken. Brooding over the long lost letter from her cousin, Jefferson Davis; the rude shattering of her dream of seeing her daughter married to the wealthy and aristocratic Felix Palfrey, the young lawyer again vaguely appearing as the cause of her daughter's refusal to consent to the earnest and importunate pleadings of the Frenchman; her daughter's almost fatal illness, during which certain of her utterances, though spoken when she was delirious, had both con-



firmed her suspicion that her daughter was infatuated with the young lawyer, and intensified her dislike of him; all, combined with the loyal element's ever-increasing hostility to the Culpeppers, the apostasy of the Gildersleeves and the Goldbecks, and then the defection of her own son, had resulted in a serious collapse of her never rugged health, and the perfecting of Samuel Simonson as her supreme *bête noir*.

Only twice had Vergie's conduct been such as to warrant her in giving vent to her antipathy: when Vergie had so strangely, to her it seemed immodestly, invited the young lawyer to her *camera da letto* the night he had returned to report the quelling of the mob; and when a rustic lover had reported to his sweetheart, a servant at The Elms, that twice he had seen Miss Culpepper and Mr. Simonson together, many miles from New Richmond, on the Serepta road. To this gossip of an "inferior" Charlotte Culpepper scorned to give credence, though it afforded her an opportunity to express herself to Vergie.

Dr. Culpepper at first, to the contrary, had rather liked the young lawyer; but when he had learned that he had "broken bread" with Lincoln and, though a Missourian, was not a Secessionist, he had begun to view him with less favor; and, finally, when he had concluded, despite Armentrout's stout denial, that the young lawyer was responsible for his son's "infamous" conduct, his bitterness knew no bounds.

Under such conditions it was manifestly impossible for Vergie to receive the young lawyer at The Elms. However, it's "an ill wind that blows no man good."

Dr. Boynton, who was Mrs. Culpepper's physician—for no doctor ever prescribes for his own family—long had advised his patient to try the climate and waters of Rockcastle Springs, among the wild and craggy highlands of

Pulaski County, Kentucky. To this advice she had demurred, not only because of her unwillingness to leave her husband and daughter exposed to so many perils, but also, on account of her great faith in the professional skill and wisdom of Dr. Boynton.

But when Dr. Boynton became a state prisoner at Cleopas Mrs. Culpepper consented to be removed to the Kentucky health resort. Vergie had desired to accompany her mother, but this was promptly vetoed. "It will be almost like returning home," she had said, "to go to Rockcastle Springs; besides, your father needs you now more than I do, especially since Harold's gone."

Thus, according to the mother's instructions, the father was to look after the daughter, and the daughter was to take care of her father.

But these were busy days for Dr. Culpepper. Chills and fever were unusually prevalent, typhoid and pneumonia had become epidemic, and at Pewaumee there were probably a dozen families stricken with smallpox. It was alleged that they had "caught" the smallpox from infected clothing sent North by the Confederate Government, hoping thereby to greatly distress and cripple their enemies—a monstrous charge and wholly without proof.

But however much the loyalists might despise Dr. Culpepper's politics, no one questioned his preëminence as a physician; accordingly by day and by night he was constantly busy, no longer menaced, because it was known that he was on errands of mercy and healing.

Who shall blame the young lovers for rejoicing over such opportunities as now were afforded them for seeing each other, with no obstacles in the way save three or four old servants who were devoted to their young mistress? And who shall blame them for making the most of them?

Thus, in some mysterious manner, the intelligence would find its way to the young lawyer that "the coast is clear. Papa is gone to Troas," or Pawaumee, or Thyratira, or Fairhaven, or Centreville, or Postville, or Enochsburg, or Serepta, or the Mule Creek settlement, or to the Mount Catherine neighborhood—"will be gone all day;" or, "all the afternoon;" or, "until almost midnight."

If there be those who would criticise Vergie let them remember her great love, and the imperious call of the mating-instinct that will not be denied, and cannot be suppressed, combined with the fullness of satisfaction she found in the high-souled, honorable man to whom she had committed everything; and if the young lawyer be criticised for yielding to her call, in the midst of war and war's alarms and the prosecution of his great profession, at least it can be pleaded for him that everything in him answered to her call, as the sense of taste thrills at the sight of a delicious potion; in short, that he yielded to her lure because she was physically charming, vitally exhilarating, and intellectually qualified to meet him in his own arena and make her companionship a constant delight.

In some respects Vergie was his superior. She had a social grace and culture, to him most captivating, which he did not possess. From her mother she had learned the Romance languages and with her had attained a fluency and felicity of expression in them that had surprised and delighted even the accomplished Felix Palfrey, and here he was wholly lacking. Even in the classics, thanks to her father's training, she was the young lawyer's equal, and in the Doctor's beloved Horace she surpassed him.

But it must be confessed that as a lover he was very human, often preferring the honied sweets of her lips to the most exquisite verse her tongue could utter, and the touch



of her hand to all the odes and epodes of the Horatian muse.

One summer evening at The Elms they were seated in the deep shadow of a bower of honeysuckles through which only an occasional moonbeam penetrated, she with all the confidingness of innocence nestling her head against his breast, when he bent low and whispered: "Darling, if some day beyond the altar and the orange blossoms you should become the mama of a sweet babe, yours and mine, my happiness and reverence for you would know no bounds."

Instantly her whole body trembled, and reaching up she drew his head down and gave him a kiss he never forgot, it was so clinging, so—passionate.

Betweenwhiles the young lawyer was driven with work and anxious with many cares; for the tide both political and military was against the Union; but to Vergie the cares and conflicts of the world had become unreal, phantasmagoric, and to his surprise the little interest she manifested was in favor of the cause so near and dear to his heart. He was not versed in the lore of women, else he would have known that it is their nature to espouse the cause of the men they love.

Hence, at first, for fear of wounding her, he spoke but guardedly of the progress of events; and then, seeing she took no offense, more fully. As disasters multiplied, and the outlook for the Union became more and more alarming, and she marked the care-look in his eyes, and the deepening care-lines in his face, she surprised him yet more by her tender and unaffected sympathy. Even the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on the Twenty-Second of September did not lessen her devotion to her lover.

"Tell me, I beseech you, all your troubles. Believe me, I am most sorrowful on your account," she would say, pressing his hand and playfully asking if "great big fine

birds that soar to the skies, and that have such searching eyes, and strong wings, and are so imperious, are really so *very* fond of *cherries?*” a roguish way she had of inviting kisses—then offering him a pair of tempting cherry-red lips to feast upon.

Thus gradually she became his confidante and counsellor in all save the Knights of the Golden Circle—he knew that her father was a co-conspirator and, with a delicacy that did him honor, and greatly enhanced him in her sight, never referred to that organization. The Maine election, at which the Administration majority was reduced from 19,000 to 4,000, profoundly grieved Mr. Lincoln; and the young lawyer told Vergie all about it. Even more disappointing were the October states: Ohio sent only five Republicans to Congress, but fourteen Democrats; Indiana, three Republicans and eight Democrats; Pennsylvania, that had given Mr. Lincoln a majority of 60,000, now gave a Democratic majority of 4,000; New York had elected Horatio Seymour by a majority of 10,000; then, finally, Illinois had gone against Lincoln and his Administration 17,000 strong, and sent to Congress three Republicans, over against eleven Democrats, Raleigh County, of course, going almost solidly Democratic. To his great comfort the young lawyer saw that Vergie was not elated, but, on the other hand, shared with him his distress.

“I do not fully understand all these things,” she said, stealing her hand into his, “but I do sympathize with *you*, and, oh, so much wish you could have everything your own way.”

Thus encouraged, and finding so much consolation in her sympathy, he detailed to her the military troubles of the President: what a thorn in his side McClellan had become; how that Buell and Butler and Burnside and Pope and Halleck had tried him to the utmost; the cruel so-called vic-

tory of Antietam—it was a long story and, from the Northern point of view, pitiful; but one in which an ardent Southerner would find much over which to exult. But Vergie bade the young lawyer have courage. “If the North be right—and I’m myself almost a Yankee since you’ve come into my life, or rather have become my life, and now Harold is on your side—presently wise leaders will be found, and Right will be victorious.”

Early in December Simonson, at the request of the President, made another tour of Southern Illinois, visiting not only the places he had previously visited but as many more towns.

The young lawyer was amazed to mark the increase of dis-Union sentiment. Everywhere he found the Knights of the Golden Circle strongly organized and defiant. McClellan’s retirement was denounced as an outrage, the Battle of Antietam hailed as a glorious Confederate victory, and the taking of Harper’s Ferry declared to be a disgrace to the Union army. Grant’s movement toward Vicksburg was regarded as a wild goose chase, to be accounted for on the theory that Grant was more drunk than usual. The political reverses of the Administration had been celebrated with bonfires at Egypto, where Lincoln and Douglas had debated, and at Lindau, Salamis, Salerno, and Ann Eliza. Some of the more moderate papers had announced George B. McClellan of New Jersey, and Horatio Seymour of New York, as their choice to head the next National Democratic ticket; others more enthusiastic had nailed to the masthead the names of Vallandigham and Pendleton.

As on his previous tour he observed women’s deep interest in politics and that they were even more bitter than the men, many of them referring to Logan as that “Black Devil,” while Lincoln was commonly called “The Babboon.”

Babes, too, usually bore Southern names, the full name



now being given to emphasize their loyalty to the Confederacy. Thus: "Jefferson Davis Smith," "Robert E. Lee Brown," "Robert Toombs Jones," while even girl-babies effloresced as "Lea," "Roberta," "Jeffersonia," "Jacksonia," "Johnstonia," and "Alexandria," in honor of Davis, Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Toombs, Stephens, and Albert Sidney Johnston.

But as most of the mothers were of Southern lineage and many of them had kinsmen fighting under the Stars and Bars he was not surprised at their passionate devotion to the Southern Confederacy.

Possibly, too, his gentle leniency of judgment was in some measure due to the loyalty to him of a certain other woman who for love of him had broken away not only from the South but also from the sacred faith so tenaciously held by her parents.

The Fourteenth of December was a memorable day throughout the Nation. On that day and the Fifth of the following May despairing gloom in the North reached its nadir and triumphant hope in the South its zenith; for on the Fourteenth of December the Nation learned of Burnside's terrible defeat at Fredericksburg with the loss of 10,208 killed and wounded, and 2,145 missing—that, too, with an army of 113,000 against Lee's 78,288. And on the Fifth of the following May the Nation got the news of Hooker's Waterloo at Chancellorsville, losing 17,197 men, 14 guns, and 20,000 stands of arms—yet with an army of 124,500 men opposed by only half that number under the command of Lee.

The almost utter destruction of the Union army at Fredericksburg, following the signal September, October and November political reverses, created a veritable frenzy of joy in the hearts of Southern sympathizers everywhere, but

nowhere greater than among the Raleigh County Knights of the Golden Circle.

The news reached New Richmond a little before noon when the Enochsburg stage arrived, bringing the daily papers.

"That's a victory I mean to celebrate," said Dr. Culpepper at the noonday meal.

"What is it, Papa?" inquired Vergie, who now occupied her mother's place at the table. "Another battle?"

"I should say so. Listen":—turning to the paper and reading the headlines—"Great Victory for the South! Burnside Utterly Routed! Southern Valor and Generalship More Glorious Than Ever! Lee Greater Than Napoleon! Union Soldiers Killed, 10,208; Missing, 2,145!" How's that, Daughter? Glory be!"

"O Papa, isn't it terrible?"

"Terrible? What do you mean, Vergie?"

"Oh, the killing of so many poor men, Papa."

"Not if they're black Republicans trying to subjugate a liberty-loving people, and trampling the Constitution under their dirty feet."

"But, O Papa, is it as bad as that?"

The Doctor was now thoroughly angry. "See here, Daughter, what's the matter with you?"

"Why—what do you mean, Papa?"

"I'll tell you what I mean, Daughter." The Doctor always said "daughter" when very angry. "You haven't been talking right for some time; in fact, since your mother, God bless her, went away. All you've been saying for the last—well, since Boynton's arrest, has been, 'Yes, Papa! No, Papa!' Why don't you flare up like you used to, and stand by your father? What's come over you, anyway?"

"Why, Papa, how you talk! Nothing's come over me. Don't be cross with me. Am I not your little girl?" going

around the table to him, and putting her arms about his neck.

But the stern old "Knight" was not as easily mollified as usual.

"Out with it, Daughter! You're not the same."

"But I *am*, Papa. I can never be other than your faithful little girl, even though I should become ever and *ever* so big!" drawing herself up to her queenly height, and opening wide her shapely arms.

The Doctor was eyeing her keenly.

"See here, Vergie, there *is* something the matter, I tell you. For weeks I've noticed it. You've been excited, and nervous, and absent-minded. Sometimes your cheeks are too red, and your respiration's too rapid. You've got a low fever of some sort. I must give you some——"

"I won't take your old aconite, Papa; and I'm not going to take belladonna; and I'm not going to——"

"If you don't shut up I'll give you some Rochelle powders." For a moment the Doctor chuckled at his medicated joke.

"But, seriously, Vergie, something's going on around here that I don't understand. You're a good little girl, my love, but you're too excited, and—and *happy*."

"But, Papa, don't you want your little girl to be happy?"

"Oh, yes, damn it! Excuse your father, Vergie. I didn't mean to swear. But how can you be so happy, my darling, with your mother, your precious mother, away, and this damnable war going on, and——"

"But how can I keep from being happy as the day is long when——"

She caught herself just in time. She was about to say, "When the best, the noblest, the truest, the dearest man in all the world loves me with all his heart, and I love him with all my heart, and some day—Oh, well." But she



checked herself and halted, lamely.

"‘When’—what, Vergie? You didn’t finish the sentence."

"When I’m so—well, and have—the dearest papa in the world," giving him a rousing kiss.

"Look here, little sweetheart. Look your father in the face. Let me look into your eyes—deep, deep down."

"All right, Papa," kneeling before him and looking up, laughingly, into his stern and careworn countenance. "Now, Papa, what do you see?"

"I see," looking long and wistfully while his own face softened, and a tender look came into his eyes—"I don’t understand it, little one. I see in your face the same look I saw in your blessed mother’s face long years ago. It was out in the country, down near Lexington; and we’d been to church, I now remember, and were strolling home together across the meadow. And Charlotte, that’s your blessed mother, was carrying a bouquet of roses in her hand, such roses as grow only in Kentucky. And I had been pleading for her love a long time, but, somehow, it didn’t seem that I was succeeding at all. Folks don’t love these days as they used to, little one."

"O Papa——"

"And this particular day it just seemed that I couldn’t live if she didn’t love me, and I poured out my very soul to her."

"Oh, and what did you say, Papa?"

"Don’t remember now the exact words, my darling; but it was all about love; and how there’s nothing in the world worth living for save love; and how that when folks love nothing else matters much; and how that I just couldn’t live any longer without her; and——"

"And——? O Papa, *please* do go on!" Vergie’s eyes were sparkling, and her face was radiant. "And—what *did* Mama say? ‘Oh, Mees-taire! Thees ees zo ver’ soot-ten!"

Yo' ver' kin'! *Oui, oui*, a la Fee-leex?' making a comical shrug and grimace. Or: 'Oh, noble sir, I thank you sir, indeed I do; but I cannot become your bride because I do not like the *color* of your hair—you see, it wouldn't harmonize with my *complexion*?' Or: 'Most esteemed and respected sir, I am honored by your proposal, but in my—my *boudoir* I've registered a vow, a solemn vow, that I'd wed only an Ear-rl, and ever live in a palace gr-rand! What *did* Mama say?'

"Why—when I had exhausted all my love-words, and it seemed that my heart would break, and, having given up all hope, was turning away, she quietly said——" The good Doctor had suddenly become reminiscent, and there was a far-away look in his eyes.

"But, Papa—*what* did Mama say?"

"Oh—Oh, ever so quietly, 'Fairfax *dear*, why *don't* you pick up your cluster of *four-leaved* clover?' And sure enough I was about to step on a bunch of four-leaved, or good-luck, clover. And then, all at once, I knew what she meant. I just forgot everything and took her in my arms; and she, blessed angel, didn't resist a bit. And I looked down into her sweet face and saw—I—I—saw——"

"Yes, yes, Papa! You're so *slow*! What did you see?"

"Vergie," taking her face between his two open palms, and gazing long in her eyes, "I saw the same look in *her* face *then* that I see in *your* face *now*. Tell me, darling, tell your father—are you in *love* with anybody? I never saw this look in your face before. Has somebody been stealing my little girl's heart?"

It was a hard moment for Virginia Lee Culpepper. What should she say—what *could* she say? Tell her father a lie? The Culpeppers *never* lied! The Culpeppers might love the South, be Rebels, Copperheads even, but no Culpepper ever told a lie—or did a dishonorable thing. No, she wouldn't

lie to her father. Tell him the truth? Yes—but not now. She must put him off, resort to coquetry, use her wit, but, oh, for many reasons, she must not at present tell him about Samuel Simonson. She knew how her father hated the young lawyer; he would hunt him up and kill him—but no, thank God, he was away on a long tour through the southern counties of the state. Anyhow, she wouldn't tell her father for a few days.

"Vergie, dear, answer your father. Tell me——"

"Massa, gemmen ut de doah wan' tuh see yuh, suh." It was Betzeliza, one of the colored servants.

When the Doctor returned, Vergie had gone to her room.

Soon Vergie saw her father, assisted by two colored servitors, piling rails and kerosene barrels in a great heap near the house.

From her chamber window, upstairs, Vergie called: "What are you going to do, Papa?"

"Going to celebrate!" was his terse reply.

"Celebrate what?"

"The glorious victory of our army at Fredericksburg yesterday — 10,208 Yankees killed! 2,145 Yankees missing! Glory be!"

Vergie flew down the stairs, ran out into the yard, took her father by the arm, and pleadingly said:

"Papa, please don't do that!" Tears now were raining down her face.

Angrily turning on her, he shouted: "What! Have you, also, turned Yankee?"

"No, Papa, not that now. But think! You don't know where—where Brother is. Maybe he's dead, too. You wouldn't make merry over our—our *Harold's* death, would you—Papa?"

"Never again mention that name in my presence—unduti-



ful, ungrateful, disobedient son! Go into the house this minute! Do you hear me?"

Vergie knew it was useless to plead longer, and turned, with a sorrowful and foreboding heart, and went back into the house.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE MOB AT THE ELMS—SIMONSON SHOT BY ROD CLARKE

ALL the afternoon rails and other fuel were piled on the roaring fire, and the flames leaped madly toward the heavens.

At first the kind-hearted neighbors rushed to The Elms to help stay the conflagration, not dreaming that it was a festal bonfire. To all inquiries the Doctor made the same reply:

*"I'm celebrating our victory yesterday at Fredericksburg—10,208 Yankees killed; 2,145 Yankees missing. Glory be!"*

About 8 o'clock in the evening, a timid tapping on a side door was heard at The Elms. Dr. Culpepper, still excited, shirt-collar open and sleeves rolled up, little resembling the fastidious Quoth Horace of happier days, leaped and opened the door. Only the dim outline of a woman was visible.

"Please, Dr. Culpepper," a low and tremulous voice entreated, "may I come in?"

The Doctor's chivalry was instantly to the fore. "Certainly, certainly, maid or madam, step right in." The visitor entered.

"Whom have I the honor of——" He saw her face. It was Marjorie Gildersleeve. For a moment his whole being was convulsed. A fierce oath leaped to his lips; then, after a moment, he managed to control himself.

"Damn your turncoat father! I beg your pardon, Miss Marjorie. No Culpepper ever showed disrespect to a woman, not even to the kinswoman of an enemy. Miss

Marjorie, won't you have a seat by the fireplace? It's rather nippy out to-night. I didn't know you'd returned from Cincinnati."

Marjorie had thrown back the shawl that covered her head and was standing before the irate Doctor, very white, while the light from the overhanging chandelier transformed her golden hair into a nimbus such as the early masters used to paint about the heads of saints and angels.

"Or," as an after-thought, "perhaps you'd better come with me and I'll take you up to Vergie's room; of course you came to see her."

"No—yes—O Dr. Culpepper, I've come to see both of you. See! I just grabbed a shawl and came flying. Do get Vergie and run for your lives!"

It was an honest, earnest speech, but exceedingly unfortunate.

"Miss Marjorie," proudly drawing himself up to his full height, "you forget that I'm a Kentuckian. No Kentuckian ever takes to his heels! Please be seated and I'll call Miss Culpepper."

The dauntless Kentuckian had spoken as calmly, and with as great courtesy and gallantry, as though he had been at a state ball at Versailles, and had said to Madame de Maintenon, "Pray, be seated. I shall immediately apprise His Imperial Majesty of your arrival."

"But you don't understand, Dr. Culpepper!" cried Marjorie, now growing desperate. "A mob's coming. They mean to kill you. A moment's delay may be fatal. Oh, the very air is shrieking 'Murder, murder!' ever since you built the bonfire this afternoon. They hate you, *hate* you—and they've guns and revolvers, and they'll *kill* you, and—and Vergie. You're brave—of course you are; all Southerners are *heroes*! But for Vergie's sake, your own and only daughter's sake——"



"You needn't be concerned for me, Miss Gildersleeve." It was the deep, clear, resonant voice of Virginia Culpepper who had come into the room, unobserved, just in time to hear the latter part of the conversation.

"O Vergie——!"

"*Miss Culpepper*, please!"

Marjorie's eyes instantly filled with tears. "Miss Culpepper," Marjorie cried, crossing the room to take Vergie's hands, that she might the more effectively plead with her.

"*Do not touch me, please.*" So Fate might have spoken, could his sculptured lips have broken into articulate speech.

"But, Doctor and Miss Culpepper, may I not come to you on an errand of mercy? May I not be the bearer of a message of salvation? Why, I'm almost a member of your family—your daughter, sister!"

"Pardon me, Miss Marjorie; no Gildersleeve will ever be *my* daughter."

"Or *my* sister!"

Rendered desperate, Marjorie bowed her head and wept, her hair laughing with golden ringlets that refused to be confined, while her alabaster flesh glowed like a Grecian vase of sculptured marble.

"God help me," her voice trembling with fear and sorrow. "You *must* at least hear my message. A neighbor rushed into our house only a moment ago—a few minutes ago. He told Papa you were to be mobbed at 8 o'clock. Out of love for you I forgot everything except that you were in deadly peril. I flew to you through winter's cold, without coat or cloak or bonnet—only this shawl, which belongs to a servant, and which I seized as I ran, fearing you might be taken unaware and murdered before I could get here. Now, I can do no more. But as you value your lives, however much you may hate me—though God knows I never wronged either of you—heed my warning and——"

Her voice was drowned by a bedlam without—shrieks, and hisses, and stamping of feet.

There was a furious pounding on the door.

"Who's wanted?" Dr. Culpepper inquired.

"Yuh're wanted," a tempest of voices replied. "Yuh're wanted, yo' ol' Coppelhaid, Knoight uh thuh Gol'n Zurgl', doubl'doid Raibul! Come on out'n hyar foh wuh dreg yuh out'n!"

Softening his voice: "All right, boys—wait a minute and I'll come. I know you've got the dead wood on me this time."

Already Vergie, with the instinct of a born soldier, had extinguished the lights, shoved Marjorie unceremoniously into a corner out of the range of possible bullets, handed her father a double-barreled shotgun and a brace of revolvers, and found for herself a vicious-looking weapon that had belonged to Harold. The Doctor proudly observed Vergie's coolness, and that neither hand nor voice trembled. Thus armed, and the mob without becoming more and more vehement, the Doctor called:

"Now, boys, tell me what you're going to do with me."

"Wuh're gwine tuh treat yuh tuh uh full un vahried program uv 'musements," replied the spokesman. "Fust, wuh're gwine tuh gib yuh uh thrushin'—thut's fuh thuh waiy yuh've treated yuh're boy, Hor'ld. Thun wuh're gwine tuh gib yuh uh foine coht uh tah 'n' futhuhs—thut's tuh evun up ol' Ams Ahmuntrout's 'count. 'Membuh w'en' yuh whaled uhway un nah'ly knocked 'iz daylights out'n wuth uh bah uv ahrun? Folluh'n thiz yuh're tuh huv uh free roide on uh rail tuh th' Pos' Orfus 'n' beck—un 'mum-brunce o' thuh thoings yo've soid 'n' done 'gin ouh sojer boys 'wun thuh've ben hum on fuhloughs. Thun wuh'll close thuh 'formunce wuth uh gren spucteklur piece 'titled 'Yuh Murruh Hengin' uh Ol' Doc Culpaipuh'—'n' mum'ry

uh th' brave men w'ot fell ut Fred'rucksbu'gh yist'day, whose crule daith, ut thuh han's o' thu dam' Raibuls, yo've ben cel'braishunin' ul' th' a'ternoon."

There was more "information," but it was drowned by the shrieks of the mob, and the discharge of firearms. As soon as the spokesman could be heard, he demanded, "Ah yuh ruddy?"

"Ready!" responded the Doctor. "Just step inside, *gentlemen*, and I'll treat you to the best I've got. You know the Culpeppers are never wanting in hospitality."

"No; yo' come on out. Wuh doan' wun' tuh huht th' wummenfolks."

"Don't mind me, *honorable sirs*." It was the voice of Vergie Culpepper, loud, clear, defiant. "Wherever you may find my father, you'll always find his daughter."

There was another roar from the maddened mob and a renewed pounding at the door, front, sides and rear. It was evident they had surrounded the house, and that an assault was imminent.

Once more above the tumult came the voice of the leader: "Doan' put us tuh th' needces'ty uv tah'rn down yuh house ovuh yo' haid. Yuh've gut tuh come, yuh doubl'doid, hiss-in', damn' ol' Coppehhaid. Air yo' comin'?"

"Yessir, I'm coming. I'll show you scoundrels that the Rebels up North are not inferior to their victorious brothers yonder on the glory-lit field of Fredericksburg," and with that he reached for the bolt that fastened the door.

But Vergie, with woman's instinct of preservation, now flung herself between her father and the door. "No, Father, you shan't go. They'll kill you."

"Get out of my way, Daughter," the Doctor thundered. "No Kentuckian ever showed the white feather."

There came another volley of firearms, followed by a crash of broken and falling glass.



A negro servant came rushing in. "Fo' de Lawd, Massa, deyse dun sot de smoke house on fiah, un de poultruh house, un dey buil' up de bonfiah 'fresh, un um heatin' uh big kit'l uh tah."

Another Senegambian came rushing in. "O Massa, dey'se broke in de kitch'n doah, un dey'se poundin' ut de back doah. Dey sho muhda us'n. Heah um! Massa, dey sho am uh-comin'."

"Bar that door there, you black niggers!" roared the Doctor. "And take care of your missus, and—*anybody else* that may be in this room. Do you hear me?"

Now there was a storm of threats from without, and another murderous volley.

"Air yo' comin', yo' black-heahthed cowahd? Wuh're nut gwine tuh wait hyar un' longeh. Shull wuh huv tuh tah deown thus hyar house 'n' dreg yuh out'n, yo' Jaiff Davus wuhshuppuh?"

"Damn you, yes, I'm coming; take care of yourselves." The lion-hearted Doctor flung Vergie aside, unbarred the door, and stepped out, gun cocked and ready for action.

"Here I am, gentlemen," with mock courtesy. "Now, what are you going to do? But I give you fair warning that 'good old Betsey'"—patting the barrel of his gun—"is loaded to the muzzle with buckshot, and the first G——d—— *skunk* that lays hands on me will *report in hell* the next instant."

For a moment the mob was awed; but the next instant the rioters that had gained access from the rear bore him down.

There was a fierce, brief struggle; but it was soon over. It was a score, fifty, a hundred to one. In less than a minute the Doctor was bound hand and foot, and helpless before his enemies. Others with difficulty were restraining

the daughter, who now was demonstrating the fitness of her girlhood title—"The Tigress."

"W'ot shull wuh do wuth thuh durn'd ol' g'loot, neow?" The question seemed to be general.

"Heah's thuh hick'ry lashus," a man shouted, rushing forward with an armful of hickory sprouts, each from five to seven feet long, and at the base thick as a man's thumb.

Another: "Un heah's thuh futhers," exhibiting a pillow-case filled with feathers. "Ah raickun thuh tah's good 'n' hot."

There was a wild roar of approval, and a hoarse, guffawing laugh that was not good to hear.

"Yus, 'n' heah's thuh rope," shouted a third, coming forward. "Mught' good haimp. Ol' Ab Wulcoxus baist!"

The Doctor, eyes gleaming with immeasurable contempt and defiance, attempted to say something, but was dealt a cruel blow in the face, and the blood gushed in a stream from his mouth and nose. "Shet aip, yo' ol' Raibul. Come now 'n' taik yo' med'cine."

Unable to walk, as his feet as well as his hands were tied, they dragged him, brutally—for mobs are never gentle—across the yard, and quickly lashed him to a tree. The hickory sprouts were flung down at his feet.

"Who wunts tuh op'n thuh ball?" the leader inquired.

"Ah do!" "Ah do!" "Ah do!" a score responded.

"Ol' roight," responded the affable and accommodating *arbiter elegantiarum*. "Ab Petuhsun, yo' muh teeckl' 'm up uh leetl' uz uh stahtuh."

The more than willing Peterson, whose only son had been killed in the Union army at Shiloh, eagerly seized a huge hickory sprout, and was about to apply it with a will, when there was a sudden diversion, and, as if apparitions from another world, the young lawyer, Judge Gildersleeve, Amsden Armentrout, Hiram Goldbeck, Abner Wilcox, and sev-

eral others, suddenly approached and formed a circle about the tree between the Doctor and his persecutors.

It all came about on this wise:

During the uproar in the house, Marjorie, spurned and flung aside by the Doctor and Vergie, had contrived to make her escape through the basement, evade the roaring mob, and rush back to town to hasten the rescuers. Of course she was very much shaken, as any girl would have been under like circumstances.

"Oh, if Sammy were only here!" In her terror and excitement, Marjorie, as she sped along, didn't know she was talking aloud, or talking at all. "Dear, *dear* Sammy, why won't he understand? If he were only here he'd know what to do. Why can't he see that I love him? And after to-night, after what Harold's father and sister said and did, I cannot, cannot, will never marry Harold. But Sammy, why—why doesn't he *corner* me, and just *make* me tell?"

Had Marjorie known that "Sammy," who, not an hour before, had returned from Eutopolis, and, out of breath from running toward the scene of destruction, not knowing the occasion of it, had, for a moment, halted by the roadside and overheard some of the astonishing things she had said as she was passing him in the darkness, she would have been greatly mortified. But a moment later she was frightened by some one from behind suddenly laying hands on her.

"'Tis *I*, Marjorie *dear!*" the Some One quickly said. "Are you angry with me for—for," drawing her to him, and reverently planting a kiss on her forehead, "for—this?"

"O Sammy!" instantly recognizing him, "*not* there, but—*here!*" she shyly replied, drawing his head down and offering him her lips. "But, O Sammy—how did you ever guess you might?"

"Sweetheart," he solemnly replied, "it was a terrible risk



I took." [Good St. Peter, please forgive all the little fibs that lovers tell each other! They don't mean any harm by them, really they don't, and they help a whole lot.] "But, oh, I've *so* wanted to tell you this"—a kiss—"and to do this"—another great, long kiss—"ever since—ever——"

"Oh, you naughty, naughty boy! How *can* I ever forgive you? But—*so have I, too!* Hold lower, Sammy, you wicked, *wicked* man, and—and—give me another—*kiss!*"

"And say, Sammy," very softly now, for, for some mysterious reason, she could scarcely breathe, "did you never, *never* love any other girl like this?"

"Never, Marjorie, dear, like *this*, or *as* I love you!"

How long all this billing and cooing might have lasted, the Heavenly Father, who has all lovers under his special protection, only knows. For what's the sacking of a city, or the sieging of a stronghold, or the slaughter of an army, or any *little* thing like that, compared with the embrace and kiss of the one whom you adore?

But just at this juncture there came through the cold, crisp air of the December night the sound of hurried footsteps, and the next moment a silvery voice was saying:

"O Papa, Papa! I'm so *glad* you have come! Mr. Simonson and I were just *hurrying* to get you."

But from sentiment, with all its thrills and ardors, the young lawyer and Marjorie were immediately rushed into the vortex of tragedy.

"W'ot 'n' th' hell d' yuh-uns mean b' intuhfeahun' wuth ouh li'l suhpriz pahty?" shouted the indignant leader of the mob. "Wuh're jis' uxchangin' uh few plusuntrus wuth ol' Doc—sohtuh roun'n' out hiz sail-brashun, brungin' ut tuh uh propuh 'clusion, suh t' speak. G' on, Ab. Thrush hell out'n 'im!"

"Haud on," shouted the blacksmith, stepping forward and raising his huge hairy hand and arm. "Ah raickun gin

onybody's gat th' richt tae hae it in fuh this auld raibul, it's meh. Frae th' farst, ez ye ken, Ah've 'scused 'im, 'n' 'pol'gized fuh 'im, 'n' laighed fuh 'im. Twa toimes, ye rai-mumbuh, Ah facit mobs 'at 'ad horns—soom o' ye wah thah baith toimes—un shieldud 'im frae deith un damnation. Mair'n aines Ah've heided yo' fellers orf, an' savit this 'fernal Coppheheid frae th' lynchin' Ah dinna saiy 'e didna d'sarve. Mair'n ane nicht Ah've gyarded this heah hoose, intae w'ich Ah nuvuh sot foot, fuh feah soom o' oor Unyun fouk mout burn 't doon—'spashully a'ter it wes foon oot 'e wes uh bell-wether 'mang thae Hell's Annex Knoights o' thae Gol'en Zurgle, An' w'at thenks dud Ah evuh git? Unly this!"

Old Amsden took off his hat and showed a dent in the side of his head—a scar hideous and ghastly, and all the more horrible because the hair refused to grow over it.

"T' hell wuth 'im! No mattuh 'bout th' whuppun 'n' th' tah 'n' futhuhs. Brung on th' rope!" The mob was grow-ing impatient. In a rough, blundering way, everybody liked old Amsden, and resented the injury he had suffered at the hand of Dr. Culpepper.

"Noo, men—haud on! Gin ye loike meh, un Ah guess ye dae; un gin ye'd loike t' please meh, un Ah raickun——"

"Yuh're all right, ol' Ams, yo' ol' sunuvagun!" yelled the mob. "Bull-haided uz hell, corntrahr'r thun thuh daivul, bud true uz steel, by gum! Bud straitch up th' ol' Secaish, 'n' lait's see 'im *wriggle*! Fotch on thuh rope."

"Please, boys, fuh ma saik, dinna! Gin Ah kin lat bye-ganes be bye-ganes, sholy yo' fellers kin. Loose 'im, un lat 'im an' 'iz gal gang in thae hoose! W'at 'n th' hell're wuh daein' heah ut Thae Elms, onywy? We dae no b'lang heah, fellers. Lat's a' gang hame!"

"Nud boi uh damn' soight," replied the leader. "Gut tuh 'ten' t' some onfinished biznis 'foh thuz meetun' kin 'journ."

Judge Gildersleeve, Hiram Goldbeck, and Abner Wilcox, each in turn, tried to pour oil on the troubled waters, but only tired the patience of the mob, and thus rendered it all the more dangerous.

At last Judge Gildersleeve, in a low voice, said: "Sammy, for God's sake, say something! Maybe you can save the day."

The young lawyer stepped forward. Marjorie was standing beside her father. All of earth, seemingly, had faded from her face—only the spiritual was left, and that was intensified by her transparent complexion. Her golden hair, many riotous ringlets at the mercy of the amorous night-winds, enhanced the glory of her countenance, and gave to her eyes something of the mystic spell Raphael and Titian have immortalized on wall and canvas. Her breast rose and fell with a rhythm that seemed to tell of a strange new music to which it was yet unaccustomed, but was infinitely satisfying. Only once did her eyes seek the eyes of the young lawyer, but in that momentary glance he caught a glimpse—heard the melody of Celestial Chimes, joy bells—unsensual indeed, though there was not lacking passionate warmth and yearning, yet preëminently and supernally spiritual; and the young lawyer thought how sweetly radiant she was, recalling Schiller's famous saying, "Love can sun the realms of Light."

Vergie, dark, motionless, statuesque, restrained and protected by two men, was standing in the deep shadows of the trees, apparently dazed by the scene: the leaping flames; the heavy, black smoke rolling turgidly from the kettle of boiling tar; the howling mob; the grave men pleading with the mob; the man, her own father, lashed to a tree; a man, who might be her father's executioner, standing close by with a cruel weapon in his hand; another with a rope; the wild scream of a pair of red-shouldered hawks that were



nesting in the top of a giant elm; the cold gleam of distant stars; the biting, piercing night-wind. For the moment Simonson, catching a fleeting glimpse of her dark face and flashing eyes, thought of her Indian forebears, Razometah and Zohanozoheton, and wondered if she did not feel something of their wild spirit, and in her veins the fierce stirring of their blood.

The young lawyer had not vainly looked into Lincoln's face, or studied diplomacy under his tutorship unsuccessfully. Though it was known he was uncompromisingly for the Union, most of the Southerners respected him; and while he maintained cordial social relations with such outspoken Southerners as the Grants and Leverings, the Union people, Republicans and War-Democrats alike, esteemed him highly. Hence, when he stepped forward to speak he was accorded respectful attention.

He first dwelt on the Anglo-Saxon love of law and order, as opposed to lawlessness and anarchy; and then in a few brief but striking sentences portrayed the high sense of justice and equality of this great, liberty-loving, all-conquering people.

Then he passed on to show that we are *Anglo-Saxon Americans*. If there be any striking difference, from the standpoint of law and order, between Northern and Southern Anglo-Saxons, it is that we of the North, especially pride ourselves, and perhaps justly, on our ability to govern our passions in times of excitement and tumult and, in an orderly manner, submit our grievances to the great tribunal of the law, with its just and orderly processes.

It was evident he was making headway, though some were again clamoring to go on with the "onfunush'd biznis."

Next he touched on the Christian aspect of the case, happily stating the teachings of the New Testament, and, in glowing terms, portraying the example set by Jesus.

Most of the rioters were church members; and despite the fact that for a season passion had led them astray, were devoutly religious. Knowing that the young lawyer was not a member of any church, his appeal to the teachings and example of the Saviour was peculiarly pleasing and impressive.

In conclusion, he took up the domestic situation in the Culpepper household. Whatever, and however justified, might be their wrath against Dr. Culpepper, as good men they must remember that the Doctor's only son, Harold Culpepper, was a brave and gallant Union soldier. Would they, as patriotic men, make war on the parents of Union soldiers; and that, too, in the name, and in behalf, of the Union? To him it was a thing not only incredible, but almost unthinkable.

For obvious reasons, however, he pressed rapidly on; he wished only to deftly touch their emotions without giving them time to think. Given time to reflect on the Doctor's attitude toward his soldier son, and because he was a *Union* soldier, their fury would become uncontrollable.

Next he spoke of the afflicted wife, and what a blow to her would be such a tragedy as that which they were contemplating. Had the Union and its defenders sunk so low as to make war on afflicted and suffering, perhaps dying, mothers—the *mothers of Union soldiers*? If so, then the Union was a cause, and its defenders were a people, which and whom the whole world would and should repudiate and denounce.

Finally, with exceeding delicacy, he mentioned the Doctor's daughter, Miss Virginia Lee Culpepper, and how they had already *sinned* against her, a—*woman*! How ineffaceably must this *brutal* scene, and the *monstrous* epithets and blasphemies to which her ears had been compelled to give audience, be fixed in her memory! How her inmost soul

must revolt against such a hideously misrepresented Union, and those who had heaped upon her and her father, and indirectly upon her brave soldier brother, such odious, such fiendish, such well nigh unendurable indignities!

The victory was won, and the mob was melting away in the friendly shadow of the trees, when every one was startled by the sharp report of a revolver. The first thought was that some infuriated man, unwilling that Dr. Culpepper should escape what he deemed to be his just deserts, had sent a bullet crashing through the Doctor's heart; but, turning back, they saw the young lawyer reeling to the earth, and Rod Clarke standing over him with a yet smoking revolver in his hand.

In an instant Dr. Threadkill, who chanced to be standing near, had torn open the young lawyer's vest and shirt and looked for the wound. In the uncertain light it seemed that the bullet had pierced the heart. The Doctor arose and, facing the awe-stricken crowd, said: "Our brave young friend has ended his high and noble career at the hand of a villain. Samuel Simonson is shot through the heart and is dying."

Marjorie glided past the physician and knelt by the young lawyer's side, gathering up his pulseless hands, and raining a flood of tears on his face. The next instant there was a wild scream, such as the Princess Zohanozoheton might have uttered in the dark fastnesses of the Southern mountains, and in a moment Vergie, too, was kneeling beside Simonson's prostrate form.

"Get away from here, Baby Face!" she screamed. "He's mine, I tell you! He's mine! You shan't have him!"

"Vergie," replied Marjorie, with a voice of nameless sorrow, each word falling from her lips with the dewy tenderness and anguish of a tear, "Mr. Simonson is dying. Please



let him pass away in peace. If we have loved him it is well—he was worthy. Were he to live——”

Something about the young lawyer's countenance arrested their attention and, with one accord, both bowed over his face. Slowly he opened his eyes, looked for a moment, as if dazed, first into the face of one, then into the face of the other; and then, consciousness seemingly having returned, he smiled up into Marjorie's face, lifted his arm as though he wanted to place it about her neck, and, as a perfectly happy child going to sleep, softly murmured, “Marjorie!” and then—knew no more.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### VOWS AND MAIDEN FANCIES—DEATH OF CHARLOTTE CULPEPPER

THE young lawyer was battling for his life.

It was no fault of Dr. Culpepper's that he was not taken to The Elms. Kentucky gentleman that he was, the moment he was released he had hastened to the young lawyer's side, with Dr. Threadkill examined the wound, concurred in the opinion that the victim had only a fighting chance for his life, and magnanimously proffered the best of everything The Elms afforded. But Judge Gildersleeve had feelingly replied:

"No; Sammy is almost as dear to us as our own son. I was the first one whom he honored with his friendship when he came to New Richmond; he is my office mate; I'm familiar with his business; Elizabeth will care for him as though she were his mother; we must have him at The Maples."

Marjorie said nothing, though it is not difficult to surmise her thoughts and emotions.

Vergie, stunned by the young lawyer's strange actions, stood apart in the deep shadows of the trees; and as it slowly dawned on her that she had been rejected—put to shame before the mob—her hatred of him leaped to unwonted bounds, in keeping with her nature; and when she had further realized that she had been supplanted, that another had taken her place, and of all persons, a Gildersleeve — *Marjorie* Gildersleeve — *Harold's* Marjorie—her

secret rage became consuming. Her cheeks glowed, her eyes flashed, and her finger-nails were buried in the flesh of her palms, though she was not conscious of any pain.

Half hid in the sombre gloom of giant primeval trees; tall, sinewy, graceful as Diana; darkly beautiful; eyes supernaturally large; breast torn bare by ruffians, but unmindful of icy December air; deaf to the mystic, dirge-like music of æolian harps formed by leafless, interlacing boughs high above her head; regardless of the dead, or surely dying, man only a few feet distant, she was the dramatic impersonation of the high-souled Indian Princess, wounded unto death, yet refusing to die—or the tigress, all softness gone, only waiting opportunity to wreak adequate vengeance.

The wound would not have been so serious, or the patient so long prostrated, but for certain serious complications that developed on the third day. Even the layman could see that fever had set in and was running high; that he was delirious; that often he was in a state resembling coma; and that a fatal termination was to be expected.

Happily for the patient's peace of mind, everything remained a blank many days; and even after the tide turned and recovery had become assured, his mind, in keeping with his feeble and emaciated body, took but little cognizance of events, and attributed no significance whatever to them. It was feared that when his condition became normal, save strength, his desire to learn the trend of events might unduly excite him; or that he might insist on returning too soon to his work; but all their fears were groundless. The past had become to him, apparently, a *tempus incognitus*; and consequently, as newspapers were excluded from the room, and all exciting topics of conversation were prohibited, his days at The Maples were tranquil and uneventful.



Outside the sick-room, however, there were not lacking subjects of absorbing interest. Halleck now was at war with both Grant and Buell; the mystery surrounding General Stoneman's case, yet unsolved, by the way, was exciting widespread comment, and some acrimonious discussion; both Lincoln and Davis were ardent suitors for Kentucky's and Missouri's favor, with about equal chances for success; Chase and Seward were known to be at outs with the President, and shortly after offered their resignations; England, under the leadership of the Crown, and Prime Minister, Sir John Russell, was giving the Confederacy valuable philopenas, while France was offering her friendly offices to the "two governments"; Congress, to the embarrassment of Mr. Lincoln, was pressing universal and unconditional emancipation measures; the battle of Stone River, the admission to the Union of West Virginia on manifestly legal fictions—one of those many cases which are legally wrong but morally right, which might be averred of the whole course pursued by the North during the war—these are only a few of the matters, exciting enough without, but which never reached the chamber where the pale sufferer was in constant conference with Charon beside the Styx.

Even the passage of the Draft Act, on the Third of March, which so enraged the anti-bellumites, and later on precipitated furious riots, especially in New York City on the Thirteenth of July, seemed to awaken in the young lawyer only an academic interest.

As late as the Fifth of May it was not deemed prudent to mention in his presence the disastrous battle of Chancellorsville, though the frightful losses sustained by the North were more than offset, from a military standpoint, by the Confederacy's incomparable loss of Stonewall Jackson, accidentally killed by his own men.

Of the young lawyer's *affaires du coeur* nothing was

known, save by the parties concerned; hence nothing was said. Dr. Culpepper had not witnessed the brief pantomime at The Elms when it was thought the young lawyer was dying; and though Judge Gildersleeve had seen it all, he had attributed Marjorie's emotion, and the young lawyer's preference for her, to a very natural brotherly and sisterly regard for each other.

Both girls were mystified, each being ignorant of the young lawyer's relation to the other. If Marjorie was more lenient in her judgment, leaning to the opinion that Vergie's love had been unsought and, therefore, her passionate outburst at the last had been both unmaidenly and unjustifiable, it probably was because she was of a gentler nature, and because the young lawyer, in what had seemed to be the supreme moment of his life, when all empty gallantries and misleading courtesies are abjured, had thought of her only, and had pathetically expressed his delight in her presence, and longing for her love.

It must be confessed, however, that Marjorie had her unhappy moments. Of her love for Simonson she never had an instant's doubt—that much was certain; that she must always love him, come weal, come woe, she was as certain as she was of her very existence; that he was the manliest of men, the gentlest, bravest, strongest, truest, her father had declared, and she had always believed in the infallibility of her father—but in this instance her father's judgment was felt to be especially unerring because it so perfectly coincided with the verdict of her own heart and intellect.

"And yet—Vergie! Why had Vergie done what she did, and said what she had said?"

Very naturally this inquiry led to reminiscence and self-examination. She confessed to herself that, after all, the young lawyer was scarcely more than a passing acquaint-

ance. That, however, had been her fault, not his. She had needlessly flaunted in his face her engagement to Harold Culpepper—what wonder he had avoided her? As an honorable gentleman, he could have pursued no other course. And yet—and the memory of it brought a great thrill of joy to her heart—though his lips had been sealed, his eyes had always been all-eloquent of love for her; nor ever from that first night had she doubted, for a single moment, his love for her—and she knew that from their first meeting she had loved him with all her heart.

A wistful look came into her face as she recalled a certain morning at his and her father's office when, everybody being at court, he had so pathetically, yet manfully, pleaded for her love; and her answer had been—*Harold Culpepper*. As though she had ever cared for the "Young Lord of The Elms," or that her engagement to Harold had ever been more than a thoughtless "Yes," laughingly given by a young girl not yet emancipated from "pig-tails" and short skirts!

"Oh, if I had only brought, in a womanly way, my heart-unsanctioned engagement to Harold to an honorable termination, and had answered Sammy as my heart that day prompted me to do, how much happiness we might have had!" Then her mind, maiden-like, followed the mystic trail that leads on and on through flower-scented groves and gardens, and delicious tête-à-têtes, and crowded cathedral, and dainty gowns and orange blossoms, and procession to the rhythm of chiming bells, and wedding march, and whispered chorus from vested choir, and sweetest yet most solemn questions and rapturous answers, and festal dinner, followed by a long, long journey, and—

"But *Vergie*—oh, yes——"

Marjorie was not a vain girl; on the other hand, she was rather given to self-depreciation. But now she was



heart-driven to institute a comparison between herself and the woman who had suddenly cast a shadow across her happiness—as it were, take an invoice of her own charms, and also of those of the other woman in the case.

At the very outset she had to confess that Vergie Culpepper was a very beautiful and a very accomplished woman. To Marjorie, Vergie's charms were accentuated by the fact that they two represented marked types of beauty, and were opposites in all save queenly height and perfect form.

But Vergie, with all her wonderful beauty and delicacy and refinement, was of the type that might be denominated vital, strenuous, military; such as Gothic chieftain or Roman warrior-emperor might have fiercely loved, and made a whole world desolate to win. Exquisitely feminine, she was not feminine; rather was she intensely virile. Her brilliant ebon hair, deep contralto voice, glowing eyes blacker than a raven's wing at midnight, and rich, voluptuous complexion, did not belie her nature or her passion. She loved the woods, the untamed horse, the blood-tingling adventure, the wild call of the trumpet, the strident poetry of Greek and Roman bards and dramatists. That Vergie could ever be subdued and become submissive, yield herself to the holy lures of wifehood and motherhood, become homemaker and haven of refuge to the man a-weary, or suffering from sore defeat, seemed to Marjorie impossible. And yet what love and passion in a man might such a woman as Vergie Culpepper awaken and kindle to madness: so tall, so graceful, so finely formed and chiseled, so wildly and magnificently beautiful!

Once Marjorie thought she would look at herself in the mirror, but finally concluded she would rather remember how she had looked the last time she had seen herself mirrored in the young lawyer's eyes; in his eyes she knew she was surpassingly beautiful, altogether lovely, and supremely

to be desired, and for a time this thought made her very happy.

"Yes, but—*Vergie!*"

Finally Marjorie wished she could stop thinking about the—the "*Tigress*."

What if the young lawyer had been interested in *Vergie*, had he not first given his heart to her, Marjorie? That, certainly, was some consolation. And the young lawyer had noticed the *Tigress* only *after* she, Marjorie, had turned him away with that sternest of all prohibitions: You must not speak of love, or look at me, or touch me, or think of me, because I *belong* to another.

Furthermore, if it were really true that, in some way, the young lawyer had taken notice of the wild Princess of Elm Hall it had been because Her Indian Ladyship herself had taken the initiative—actually had gone out of her way to attract his attention; and, in this surmise, we know she was not far wrong, or wrong at all.

But—and here Marjorie paused a long time, examining the skillfully woven warp and woof of a dainty skirt she was hemming—admitting to be true that which *Vergie*, by both speech and action in that crucial moment, had alleged, was the young lawyer guilty of perfidy—was he by nature perfidious? It was only a thought. No, a thousand times *no*—so quick, eager even, is woman to absolve from all blame the object of her affection. Why, look at Fred, her brother. Was he not engaged to Lela Frothingay? And had he not been "interested" in other girls? And even flirted with Freda Levering—the little minx! And had she not been compelled to go to Lela and smooth things over for her brother? "And Fred's all right—of course he is, for he's my brother," she concluded, triumphantly, dropping for the moment into the first person, present tense.

"Then, too"—and the old wistful look returned—it was

with difficulty now she kept back her tears—"when I told him I was engaged to Harold, didn't I also tell him about Vergie, and how beautiful she was, and how happy she could make him?" And just at this precise moment, whether accidentally or not, we cannot say, she gave her hand a cruel jab with the sharp-pointed scissors.

"Oh, what a little fool I have been!" she murmured to herself, again dropping back into the first person, singular; "I just flung him away, just flung him away, and he wanted me so much, and I wanted *him!*"

And a pair of iridescent tears noiselessly crept up the velvety stairway of her emotions, and timidly peeked out of the two beautiful turquoise-blue windows of her soul and, not being scolded or rebuked, came out on a twin pair of cheeks that were so lusciously inviting that the vandalism of a Sabine lover would have been more than half justified on the plea of irresistible impulse, awakened by overwhelming temptation, such as no man should be expected to resist, much less overcome.

"And what must he think of me, believing me to be engaged to somebody else, and letting him do to me what he did, and what I did to him, the night I was hurrying to get help so that the mob wouldn't kill the Doctor and Vergie? Oh, I just let him hug me, and squeeze me, and kiss me 'steen times, and I just let him know that I wanted him to; and I—I kissed him back, too, every time! Oh, how can he ever respect me again?"

Her face now was very crimson, and she was so agitated she broke her needle and had to put aside her work.

"And yet"—an hour later she was calmer, having rearranged the flowers in a vase, bestowing on them a kiss that was more ardent than ordinary kisses—"I know he didn't hate me; for oh, the look and smile he gave me when we



all thought he was dying, and the way he said, 'Marjorie'—

"Oh, dearie, dearie, how I wish Sammy, *my* Sammy, would just *grab* me, and—and *corner* me, and just *make* me tell him how much I love him—wouldn't it be sweet? What a horrid old *bear* he'd be, I just know! And oh, how I'd *like* it! And what a sudden demand there'd be for *court-plaster*! Why, Darnblazer & Russell would have to order it by the *carload*! And for—for Sammy, too, as well as me!"

Thus soliloquized the fair and exquisite Marjorie—the original girl with golden hair, and the fairest and queenliest of them all. Yet she was a perfectly correct young lady, very modest—in fact, a trifle shy and timid—but do not maidens sometimes have wee thoughts to which they never give utterance, and secretly long for things which, when offered, they haughtily decline?

Early in June, Charlotte Culpepper passed away, after Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and before Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Port Hudson—while the hope might still be cherished, without unreason, that at last her cousin's government would triumph.

A week before the preceding Christmas, the Rockcastle Sanitarium physicians had informed her, in the gentlest manner possible, that she had passed beyond the help of man, and strongly advised her to return home to her husband and daughter, which she did.

Under existing circumstances and conditions, it was not a joyful Christmas at The Elms. Harold was gone, the first Christmas since his birth that he had been absent, and that presents had not been bought for him—but now his very name was forbidden. The indignity suffered at the hands of the coarse and ruffianly mob yet rankled sorely in

father's and daughter's hearts, but of this shameful occurrence the wife and mother, happily, never learned. And Vergie, for her part, had her own secret occasion for grief and rage.

But sorrow of sorrows, eclipsing all else, the light of their home was going out; their beloved, she who had always been the Angel of the Household, plainly, unmistakably, was dying.

Humanly speaking, it was well. The Good Book speaks of those "afflictions which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Charlotte Culpepper never could have survived the passing of the Old Order, nor the abusive contumely that was so soon to be visited on her cousin and all his kinsmen. It was far better that she should fall asleep, as she did, in the month of June, when the air was soft and sweet with perfume, and Nature was in high and glad festival.

Looking wistfully out of the window the day before she died, her hands held by her beloved Fairfax, she had softly murmured a bit of verse she loved:

"I gazed upon the glorious sky  
And the green mountains round,  
And thought that when I came to lie  
At rest within the ground,  
'Twere pleasant that in flowery June,

When brooks sent up a cheerful tune,  
And groves a joyous sound,  
The sexton's hand, my grave to make,  
The rich, green mountain turf should break."

And 'twas thus, "in flowery June," she "fell on sleep."

In one of her many talks with Vergie during the last week, she said:

"Daughter, dear, do not shun marriage—it is our normal station in life; for woman was made for love and marriage, for ministering and motherhood: all else in woman's life is misplaced, misdirected, and worse than wasted.

"Beware of so-called *strong-minded* women, especially such as clamor in press and pulpit and on the rostrum, and noisily proclaim that *they* have a mission. Do not argue, but—*keep away from them*. For woman's true mission is at the fireside, in the kitchen, in the sewing-room where new garments are to be made, and old ones mended and freshened, and in the sick-room where there is suffering and, sooner or later, death—and the dark pall of bereavement and sorrow.

"Marry for *love*, for there's nothing else worth living for; and cherish the love of your husband, for, Vergie, dear, *when Love is dead there is no God*.

"Marry for *children*; for it's as much woman's mission to add to the jewels of the Heavenly Father's Kingdom as it is the mission of the sun to shine, the birds to sing, the flowers to bloom, or the earth to bring forth harvests—and woman's true and only *harvest* is children. A childless woman is but a fleck of blasted and unproductive Saharan desert, cheerless, fruitless, profitless.

"Beware of selfish, worldly, childless women, my darling. Better for their husbands, and for the world, had they never been born. Their influence is bad. But for them their husbands might have married normal women and been blest, and blest the world, with offspring.

"And, Vergie, name one of your daughters *Charlotte*, won't you, for me? Maybe she'll cause you to think oftener of your dead mother.



"Marry *for* your children; for remember you alone determine who shall be their father—and they cannot help themselves. You therefore must select for them a father whom they can love and honor—such a father as will cause them to esteem your judgment, and always to be thankful to *you* for selecting such a father for *them*.

"O Daughter, I so wish you could find a husband just like your father—just like my darling *Fairfax*!

"One thing more, and you will forgive your mother for speaking of it. It's regarding the *young lawyer*. I know it's not best for mothers to over-persuade their daughters as to whom they would better, or better not, marry; yet in these matters mothers are often wiser than their daughters; and many a daughter would have been spared a broken heart and a blasted life had she heeded her mother's counsels.

"I had hoped you would marry Felix Palfrey. He's a good man, of a good family, a man of education, culture, and refinement, is blest with wealth, and would have made you a good husband, and your children a noble father whom they would have loved and been proud to honor, knowing that he was an honor to them.

"I know he disgusted you with his shams and disguises and subterfuges, and that you came to hate him on account of what you called his falsehood, hypocrisy, and double-dealing; but you forgot, my darling, that it was all in the service of a great and holy Cause—it was all for your Uncle Jefferson's great and glorious Government, for whom and which I daily offer prayers to my Heavenly Father.

"But that's all past, and let's believe that your rejection of Felix was, in some way, providential. Other suitors will come. You will have lovers many, for my little ewe-lamb is very sweet and beautiful—and you will find a good husband.

"But I was speaking of the young lawyer—how your mother's mind wanders! Something tells me that you like him; that, in a girlish way, you have taken a fancy to him; that you think of him oftener and more ardently than you should; and O Daughter, were you to come together, with your nature and his, how terrible your love would be!—it would be so wild, maddening, *desperate*! My child, my wildly beautiful Indian Princess Zohanozoheton, idol of your mother's inmost soul, true daughter of your father's heart and life, and in so many ways like him, I tremble for you!

"Do not love that man Simonson! Keep away from him! *Hate him!* I know he's educated, and can make a flowery speech, and even your father at first was taken with him; but—you must hate him. He has no *family*, no good *blood*. Abe Simonson, cracker and ex-convict, is his father, and his mother's no better. Think of *our* blood, the best blood of *Kentucky* and *Virginia*, being polluted in the veins of a brood of *cracker* children! My Virginia Lee Culpepper the *mother* of old *Abe Simonson's* grandchildren!"

The mother was exhausted, and lay back on her pillow, gasping for breath. Vergie looked broodingly into her mother's face, never before having been so addressed. Through her skin, tanned from much outdoor life, her dark-red Indian blood came and went, rose and fell. Her eyes, blacker now than inkiest midnight, seemed to have in them a consuming heat, as though thinly veiling a seething volcano. She was so still and statuesque and abrood with deep, deep thoughts, and nerved to utmost tension with fierce passions and emotions that had almost wrecked her reason, she might indeed have passed for an Indian princess, awed by some great anguishing mystery, and lashed almost beyond control by a well-nigh overwhelming fury—yet through it all grimly stoical, rigidly holding herself

silent and steady, scorning to give sign or token of aught that she thought or suffered.

"Daughter," the mother, somewhat revived, whispered, "you've not answered your mother."

"Mother, ask what you will; with all my heart I will gladly promise you, sweetest and dearest of mothers!"

"God be praised!" the mother ejaculated, lifting her hands as high as she could, and clapping them again and again.

"Give me your hand, Daughter."

Vergie knelt at the bedside and gave her hands to her mother.

"Now, Daughter, repeat after me:

"I, Virginia Lee Culpepper——"

"I, Virginia Lee Culpepper——"

"Do solemnly promise——"

"Do solemnly promise——"

"My dying mother——"

"My dying mother——"

"That I shall never marry——"

"That I shall never marry——"

"Samuel Simonson——"

"Samuel Simonson——"

"Or any other of inferior blood and character,——"

"Or any other of inferior blood and character,——"

"SO HELP ME GOD."

"SO HELP ME GOD."

Each word Vergie repeated after her mother, with her deep voice, solemn and low-toned as the notes of a great cathedral bell, as it booms at twilight across the distant waters.

"You said it, Daughter, as though you meant it."

"I not merely said it, Mother, dear, but I vowed it; *and may my soul be damned if I break my vow to you!*"



"O Daughter, isn't that blasphemy?"

"I know not, but I mean it. If it be blasphemy, then let my soul be accursed. I cannot change it. Mother, your *blessing!*"

Reverently, Charlotte Culpepper pronounced the historic blessing of her church, adding thereto, "My beloved daughter, Virginia Lee."

"Now, Mother, darling," in her deep voice, "one more blessing—for *Harold!*"

"Hush, Daughter!" the mother whispered. "Your father does not permit——"

"Nevertheless, he's your son; he's my brother. Can you withhold your blessing from your only son, my only brother? Don't you love Harold any more? O Mother, I love my darling brother more and more; and though I'm not good like you, dearest Mama, I pray for him every day."

"And the good God will hear and answer your prayers, my precious. But hark! Isn't that your father coming?"

Vergie looked. "No, Mother; it's only Betzeliza."

"Daughter, close the door. Kneel once more before me. It will break my heart to die without leaving my poor boy a mother's blessing."

With both hands clasped on her daughter's vicariously-offered head Charlotte Culpepper again pronounced the great blessing that has been the solace of countless millions, this time adding, "My darling son, my dearly beloved son Harold."

"You'll tell Harold, won't you, that his mother left him her blessing?"

"Yes, dearest Mother; and for him, as he would do if he were here, I bless you, and adore you for it!"

The day after Charlotte Culpepper's funeral, a lady in

deep mourning and heavily veiled, walked up the brick-paved way from the street to the mansion known as The Maples. The Gildersleeves were seated on the broad colonial porch.

Without raising her veil the caller said, "I would see Mr. Simonson."

"Why, it's Vergie," they exclaimed with one accord. "Certainly, Miss Vergie," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "Remove your things and be seated. I'll call Mr. Simonson. You know he's able to be up now."

"Thanks, Mrs. Gildersleeve. I'll not be seated. I wish to see Mr. Simonson alone."

Mystified, all save Marjorie, Mrs. Gildersleeve gently replied:

"Certainly, my dear; just pass in. His is the second room to the left, upstairs."

Noiselessly she glided in. The young lawyer's door was ajar and she entered without ceremony. Suddenly looking up from a book, a volume of Cicero's orations, he saw before him a woman, or rather the black sheath—gown, hat, veil—that wholly concealed her. However, he instantly recognized her and involuntarily exclaimed, "Vergie!"

Ignoring his salutation, but with that tone of voice which, once having heard, one could never forget, she said: "You gave me these!"

She flung down on a table beside him a rose, a buckthorn leaf and blossom, and a spray of fern, but all crushed and broken.

Again the young lawyer essayed to rise, to speak, to say or do something, but she would not permit him.

"My blessed mother tried to teach me to hate you," in the same marvelous tone of deepest passion, "but she failed, because—I *already hated you!*"

Only for an instant she raised her veil, not for him to see her face, nor indeed that she might see his, but that she

might have the testimony of her own eyes that the person whom she was addressing was really the man against whom she had vowed eternal hatred.

As noiselessly as she had entered she now departed—and without farewell, as she had entered without salutation.

*She had been wounded—almost unto death.*



## CHAPTER XXIV

### 'TWIXT LOVE AND DUTY—BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA

THE wonderful summer of '63 was epochal in the lives and history of many New Richmond families.

It was during that eventful summer that New Richmond learned that Harold Culpepper was very much alive; that he had become "Major Culpepper of the 33d Kentucky Volunteers," commonly known as "The Kentucky Terrors;" that Major Culpepper had been with Grant at Paducah, Henry, Donelson, Corinth, and Shiloh, and was now a prisoner of war at Libby prison, Richmond, Virginia; that Albert Levering, who had rendered valiant service in Company C, 60th Illinois Volunteers, had been severely wounded and was in a hospital at Louisville, Kentucky; and that Hugh Grant had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and had been mentioned for "conspicuous bravery and gallantry" by Grant in an official dispatch to the President.

How this intelligence had affected the parents of the boys, all from Knights of the Golden Circle households, may be surmised from the following brief conversation. Old Joel Levering, rankest of rebels, but having the heart of a true sportsman, one day meeting Dr. Culpepper, observed:

"Ouh boys ah makin' uh mouty fine recohd, suh, even ef they ah damned Unionists. Al, my son, is in the hospital at Louisville—hole in his side ez big ez youah fist; nuvva uh whimpeh, suh. Hugh's uh Lieutenant-Colonel, damn him, an's gwine tu mahry muh daughteh Freda—got uh lettah from him wantin' muh consent, th' infernal rascal!

Guess Ah'll hev tuh tek him in. Be ez poah ez paupehs, suh, but Freda doan' care. An' youah boy, Docteh! Neveh uh fineh boy than youah son Harold, an' he's a Majah, suh, uh *rale* Majah, Docteh!"

"Yes, Joel; wish he was in the ground instead of Charlotte," replied the Doctor, and walked gloomily on.

But of all the surprises none equaled that of the young lawyer's abandonment of his profession and enlistment in the army.

His action could hardly be said to have met with anyone's approval. "Sammy," said Judge Gildersleeve, "you are practically at the head of the Raleigh County bar, with a practice such as the oldest of us rarely have enjoyed, and with a great and honorable career before you; besides your health is not good enough for soldiering. So far as the wound's concerned you're all right, but man alive you're so weak and wobbly on your pins you'll collapse and go to pieces in less than a month—peter out right away. And the folks down at The Maples—they'll never consent; and Elizabeth ought to have something to say. Give it up, Sammy, give it up!"

"Stay where you are," wrote Unkmyer, Provost Marshal at Onsted. "You're worth more, single-handed, in Southern Illinois, than any ten regiments in the field. We simply can't get along without you in Egypt. Why rush down South and get your damned head shot off?"

Colonel Morton, who yet remained in New Richmond, earnestly labored to dissuade the young lawyer. "There's every reason, Simonson, why you should remain here. Armentrout and all the ultras are up in arms against your going away, and you can't be spared. Indiana, from the Lake to the River, is in the hands of the Copperheads; a majority of the Indiana legislature is openly in alliance with Vallandigham and Seymour, and secretly in collusion with

the government at Richmond; and were not Governor Morton every inch a hero, everything in Indiana would go by the board. Here in Southern Illinois the situation never was worse, and you alone are master of the whole layout. Then the War-Democrats," he continued, "swear by you, and we simply *must* keep them in line. Finally, Simonson, even the Seceshers, the Grants and Frothingays and Leverings, respect you; and you're the only man that can act as a go-between."

However, after all persuasion and argument and citation of undeniable facts, Simonson was none the less resolved to enlist. In his present state of mind he felt that it would be a relief to face shot and shell—even to welcome death. Possibly he was a trifle morbid after his long fierce contest with bullet-wound and disease, but it was more than that.

He was profoundly conscience-stricken on account of his treatment of Vergie and that, too, at such a time; her brother in prison; her father in constant jeopardy: when every instinct of chivalry, no matter how much he might love another woman, should have kept him loyal to her.

And now, such is the perversity of the heart, that he had lost Vergie he really desired her. Previously her sparkling naïveté and zestful camaraderie had been the lure but now he felt it was Vergie herself. Of passion there was none, and at that he marvelled; now the impulse was purely altruistic. In his remorseful self-abnegation he was willing to be unhappy that she might be happy; yet if he could only bring back to her cheeks the old-time splendor, to her eyes the former gladsome light, to her voice the lilt and laughter of the day at the buckthorn tree and other wonderful days he, too, would be unspeakably happy.

"Oh, yes," often he said to himself, "I love Marjorie. She's all the world to me; how can I live without her?"



But though I have reason to think she loves me yet—*she belongs to another.*”

Then he would compel himself to consider Vergie and, goaded by an offended conscience that wrathfully and incessantly told him he had treated her shamefully and pity for her in her loneliness and sorrow, he would vow to consecrate himself to her happiness and, could he win her consent, to claim her as his wife.

Of course dilettante casuists would have told him that he was illogical and unpsychological, that before acting he should carefully analyze his motives and emotions. But when was love ever rational, or an offended conscience analytical? That he must make reparation to the sorely grieved and offended girl was his uppermost thought—how? By giving her that which, seemingly, she had desired above all else—himself. If grief and humiliation had steeled her against all future affection or happiness—what then? Then he must mitigate her disappointment as much as possible by consecrating to her a life-time of loving service and devotion.

So he would go away for a season to give Vergie time to lose some of the fierceness of her wrath against him, and to gird himself against his love for Marjorie—as the young girl about to take the veil goes into retirement for a season to divest herself of all carnal affection, and to gird herself for the high and holy service to which she has solemnly dedicated her life.

In the meantime Vergie, also, was preparing to leave New Richmond; but with her all thoughts of self were put aside, forgotten, in her all-consuming desire to comfort her brother in Libby Prison and, if possible, to secure his release.

Thus it chanced that Simonson and Vergie Culpepper, each ignorant of the other's plans and purposes, were soon to leave New Richmond, one to hasten to old Richmond, the

other to join the Union army, under the command of Rosecrans, now on the eve of the awful battle of Chickamauga.

Marjorie's and the young lawyer's parting had in it nothing of the dramatic, and to both was exceedingly disappointing.

With all his inward perturbation, and secret vows of fidelity to Vergie, Simonson was disappointed because Marjorie at the last moment had exhibited so little emotion, or none at all. He did not consider what Marjorie had a right to expect of him, after all that had occurred, and that now he was treating her with a formality that was wholly inexplicable, at least to her; nor did he consider her innate shyness and timidity. Afterward he was rather glad she had exhibited so little concern; it seemed to lessen his perfidy toward her, and to afford him greater freedom to give himself unreservedly to the promotion of Vergie's future happiness. Of course, Marjorie's reserve was inspired, he thought, by her loyalty to Harold.

For obvious reasons Marjorie, at the last, unvexed by secret torments, and with her pure heart wholly given to the young lawyer, was sorely puzzled and bitterly disappointed.

When informed that "my Sammy" was going to the war she had wept till her eyes were very red, and indulged in many maidenly lamentations; but there was at least this consolation: this new crisis would afford opportunity for them to come to a clear and distinct understanding.

Then she had pictured in her mind, as maidens will do, just how it would all come about. Sometime, she couldn't tell just when; and somewhere, she hoped it would be in the library when the folks were all out, he would be very pale and unhappy, and she would comfort him—so and so, and so and so. And then he would take just the wee-est bit of hope and move a little closer to her and she would

encourage him a little more—so and so, and so and so, becoming just the wee-est, tiniest bit bold. Then, finally, he would make the great discovery that, really and truly, after all, she *did* love him with all her heart, and would grab her, just like a horrid old *bear*; and she wouldn't resist at all, only just the *wee-est, ti-niest, lit-tle-est* bit, just for the sake of appearances, and to make him all the *more* awfully, *awfully* bearish. And then he would just thus and thus and so, and she, no longer under restraint because *all* the fault was his, because he had taken the advantage of her in spite of ail that she could do, would just thus and thus and so to him all that he wanted her to. And then, after the *long-est* while of *thus-ing* and *thus-ing* and *so-ing*, she would tell him she hadn't been engaged to Harold for the *long-est* while; and that she *never* had loved Harold at all; and that she *couldn't* be anybody else's but his, that is, Sammy's, forever and forever.

But, as a matter of fact, the event proved to be just the opposite. "Sammy" didn't "grab" her, or "corner" her, or become a "horrid old bear," nor "compel" her to tell him anything; and, pitiful to relate, did not give her even the wee-est "chance" to tell him what she supremely desired him to know.

The leave-taking was very simple, very prosaic, very matter of fact. The hack that was to take him to Serepta, whence he was to go by rail to Cincinnati, came while they were at breakfast. The family arose with the young lawyer. "Sammy" gravely shook the hand of each member of the family, simply saying, "Good-bye," and a moment later was being whirled away. Could anything have been more unlover-like? And especially remembering that "Sammy" had spent the entire previous evening, his last evening, at the office with her father talking *business*?

And yet Marjorie—Oh, woman, seer, see-er, of things



invisible to keenest masculine vision, and interpreter of things unwritten even in Horatio's dream-philosophy! Marjorie saw something in the young lawyer's eyes that neither the Judge or Elizabeth or Fred saw; felt something in the touch of his hand that none of them felt; thought, though of this she might have been mistaken, that he held her hand just an instant longer than he held their's; and observed that while in taking leave of the others he had simply said, "Good-bye," to *her* he had said, "Good-bye, *Marjorie*"—and he had said it just as he said it that night when he had caught up with her in the dark—the night Dr. Culpepper and Vergie were mobbed.

The truth must be told: not wholly because of patriotic ardor had the young lawyer become a member of Rosecrans' Army—(whose Chief-of-Staff was to become, seventeen years later, the twentieth President of the United States); not, indeed, that he was unpatriotic, but to escape unhappy memories, the clamor of a reproving conscience, and to gird himself for the performance of a duty which he regarded himself in the highest sense honor-bound to perform. Hence his supreme motive, in seeking a new environment and a different arena of endeavor, was to find harder work, gravest peril, and—forgetfulness; and in forgetfulness to renew his strength.

He could not have chosen a better time or place. Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Fort Hudson and other victories had keyed-up the Federal army to a high enthusiasm and President Lincoln was no longer under the necessity of pleading with truculent and recalcitrant generals; the very air was surcharged with martial ardor and determination.

Everybody felt, too, that very soon a great and decisive battle was to be fought in the West and presently all eyes were turned toward Chattanooga as the probable storm-centre.

In that mountainous neighborhood two great armies were concentrated: the Federal under Rosecrans, the Confederate under Bragg.

Rosecrans, unhappily, was at outs with the War Department at Washington but was believed to be a brave, skillful, and patriotic commander. Bragg labored under the deprestige of many sore defeats, having but recently been forced out of Shelbyville, Wartrace, and Tullahoma; but he was known to be fanatically loyal to the Confederacy and a valorous fighter. He was also known to be reënforced by the indomitable Longstreet and his veteran corps drawn from the Army of Northern Virginia. Bragg had about 92,000 men, with Hood, Buckner, and Walker of J. E. Johnston's army, as his chief field officers. Rosecrans' greatest field marshal was Gen. George H. Thomas, while his army outnumbered Bragg's two or three to one.

It was at Chickamauga, September 20, 1863, the young lawyer had his first taste of war—and he liked it. Afterward he came to hate it, but now it afforded him what he wanted: action, peril, concentration of thought on the imminent and immediate, tremendous endeavor.

He was fortunate in being in a regiment that fought all the afternoon until nightfall close to Thomas, the Rock of Chickamauga; saw Longstreet hurl Hood through the opening made by Woods' mistake, the whole Federal left wing crumble, and the Federal troops turned into an orderless rabble; saw Garfield arrive at Thomas' headquarters with the terrible news that Rosecrans had given up the battle as lost, and had returned to Chattanooga to prepare for an orderly retreat; saw Longstreet in person lead the historic charge, swift and awful, on Thomas' right and center; saw the shattered Federal troops, panic-stricken, surging back through the gaps, Thomas never budging, immovable as the spur of Missionary Ridge that loomed up behind him; heard

of the reënforcements that would enable Thomas to hold Polk and Longstreet at bay till other troops could be sent to him—the troops that never came—or till darkness would bring deliverance; saw soldiers joyfully drink the sacrament of patriotism, some wearing the gray, some the blue; saw men die, gasping in death: “God bless and save my country”—some praying for the government at Richmond, others for the government at Washington; saw bravery and heroism unsurpassed at Marathon or Thermopylæ—now under the Stars and Bars, now under the Stars and Stripes; saw the raptures of heavenly glory, smile of the great Jehovah, on lips already cold in death—the one hero from Mississippi, the other from Massachusetts; saw devout priests and ministers braving the perils and horrors of destruction, gently commending the dear Jesus, and holding before eyes rapidly dimming in death the Savior’s Cross—some of the priests and ministers owning glad and devout allegiance to Jefferson Davis, others to Abraham Lincoln; God, Savior, Mother, Wife, Sister, Daughter, Sweetheart, ah, how men, even when grim Death is mercilessly throttling them, even after consciousness has left them, still murmur the sweetest and sacredest names—and often these names he heard, now on the lips of Rosecrans’ dying men, now on the lips of the smitten boys of Bragg’s and Hood’s and Longstreet’s cohorts; all these things he saw and heard, and more.

The coördination and coörding of the Federal troops, if there was any unity of council and action aside from the troops under Thomas’ command, Simonson was too busy, or too ignorant of the technique of war, to understand—perhaps there was no synthesis at all. Fate or Providence had placed him at the very vortex of the seething hell of destruction.

To him it all was most terrible, most intoxicating, glorious. Advancing now, and now retreating; now wedged at



the right, now catapulted from the left; hurled down this ravine, and in a moment mounting back again—as ships, for a moment plunged into the trough of the sea, rise to soar the loftiest billows; now fighting single-handed, now in the maelstrom of regiments and battalions swirling like some awful gyratory storm, or waters at a rocky headland lashed by powerful contending currents to foam and inextricable confusion; now the “rebel yell,” now the “yankee thunder,” and now the two in one as they grappled unto death for the others’ colors or position.

Once Simonson saw a Federal battle-flag fall, the brave bearer shot through the head. The regiment, seeing Longstreet coming with an overwhelming force, broke and fled. Simonson grabbed up the flag just as there was a counter-charge, and Longstreet swerved to the right. At that moment Lieut.-Col. Charles H. Morgan, of the 21st Wisconsin, came dashing up.

“What are you doing with that flag?” he thundered.

“The color-bearer’s dead, sir,” touching his cap, “and the regiment’s gone; and I’m saving the Union, you see, single-handed.”

“Where’s your company, regiment, command?”

“Don’t know, sir,” standing “attention.” “Too busy saving the Union to look after them, too. They’ll have to look out for themselves till I get through with this job.”

“Is there an eagle branded on the staff of the flag?”

Looking—“There is, sir.”

“Then it belongs to one of the Wisconsin regiments. I belong to the Twenty-first. Give it to me!”

So the battle of Chickamauga raged. There wasn’t much order. At times it was a captain’s battle, sometimes even a private’s. After McCook and Crittenden, both corps-commanders, and Rosecrans, commander-in-chief, had abandoned the field and returned to Chattanooga, not knowing

whether Thomas were annihilated or not, the battle often degenerated into hand-to-hand contests. Sometimes a private, a natural leader among his boon companions, would shout: "Come on, fellows. Let's give 'em hell, down yonder!" and away they'd go.

On two or three such occasions the young lawyer's instinct for leadership asserted itself. Once a rush was made by a remnant of Buckner's command, not more than a score or thirty men, to take a Federal gun that was held only by the gunners. The task would have been easy, and flying stragglers were making no resistance. Fired by the shame of the thing, and recalling a few of the commands and evolutions he had learned in the Harvard cadet-corps, and during a summer's drill in the Massachusetts militia, he shouted: "Attention! 'Bout face! At 'em, and give 'em hell!" Suiting the action to the command he took the lead. The stragglers, stirred by the bravery and audacity of the "high private," fell in line, and the "Johnny Rebs" took to their heels. Gaw, Garfield, and Wood witnessed the act, and Garfield said, "I must ascertain his name and command, and mention him to my chief. Just now the army is needing such young men; and if I'm not mistaken some mighty good material's going to waste there."

At last—but, oh, how long that terrible afternoon!—the battle was over. Gen. Gordon Granger had fired the last volley, a shotted salute of six Napoleon guns, and Simonson, hunting for his command, was passing through a woods-pasture. Presently he heard the voice of a man, evidently dying. There were thousands of men on every hand dead, or dying—many of them praying and commending their souls to God; but there was something so pathetic above the ordinary about this voice he was about to answer when some one else responded.

"Who are you?" he heard the sufferer ask.

"No matter, my boy," was the gentle response, "but I'm General Polk, a corps-commander. What can I do for you?" The voice was very soft and caressing.

"Do you hate the Rebels?" Evidently the dying man had not understood the name of the man who had responded to his call; or did not remember that General Polk was a great Confederate general.

"No, lad; I don't hate any one. I'm sorry if you do."

"No, I don't—except the Rebels. Say——" There was a long pause; and when he spoke again his voice was much weaker. The sands of life were fast ebbing away. "S-say, can you pray?"

"Yes, dear boy. I'm what you call a preacher, the Bishop of Louisiana. Would you like for me to pray for you?"

"Y-yes, Gen—Bish—w'atever you are. I'm Billy Smith of the 11th Connecticut. I w-wish you'd pray for—for me. I g-guess I'm d-dy——"

Reverently the brave Confederate General (who was also a godly Bishop) commended the dying Federal soldier's soul to God. And as the "Rebel" General "talked with God," as friend with friend, peace came to the poor soldier's soul—Billy Smith of the 11th Connecticut. The prayer ended, the Bishop-General addressed the sufferer, but there was no response. His soul had been wafted to the realms of the blest—"where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest"—soothed and sustained by a "Rebel" general's prayer.

The following day Simonson was ordered to report at Rosecrans' office, Army Headquarters.

"My chief-of-staff, General Garfield," old "Rosey" said kindly, "has been telling me about you. He thinks you've material that ought to be utilized. Do you know anything about the manual of arms, and how to handle men?"



General Garfield laughingly broke in, "General, you should have seen him yesterday. I then said to myself, 'There's a better captain than many I could name.'"

Simonson modestly detailed his meager military knowledge, and the even less experience he had had in commanding men.

"I like the way he talks, Garfield," turning to his chief-of-staff. "What about Company K you were telling me about, a part of which this youngster actually did command a while yesterday afternoon?"

"Much depleted, I'm sorry to say, General. Hood almost annihilated it. What's left want this young man for their new captain—they've been to see me to-day. And by the way, General, you know their captain, Captain Goldthwaite, was among the killed yesterday; so that Company K must have another captain."

Again Rosecrans turned and kindly scrutinized the young lawyer. "Simonson—I believe that's your name—I'm going to make you a captain, and give you Company K."

"No, no," he expostulated. "I can't take it, won't have it! Give it to somebody else! Please, General, let me explain." It was impossible to doubt his sincerity.

"Garfield," said Rosecrans, humorously, "send out for a photographer. I want Simonson's picture. He's the first man I've met since the war broke out that doesn't want an office, or isn't jealous of his rank, or dissatisfied with his grade. Why, damn it all, Garfield, even we can't claim immunity. You're straining your hames for a major-general's commission, and I'm—why *I'm* trying to boss old Stanton, and run the whole War Department." Both generals laughed heartily.

Then, turning to Simonson, he kindly pointed out what he conceived to be his duty.

"But, General Rosecrans, I'm not qualified. I'm not here

for glory, and I don't want a commission. I'd rather wear this plain uniform than even the—the uniform you are wearing, sir."

"And in that, Simonson, you show your good sense," said the General, with a sigh, "but—

" 'Ours not to make reply,  
Ours not to reason why,  
Ours but to do and die——'

"and I know you'll not fail me, or fall short of your duty. By the way, *Captain* Simonson, I want to become better acquainted with you. Come and see me often, that is—*if I retain my command.*"

One afternoon General Garfield came into his chief's office and said, "General, I've been asked to accept the Republican nomination for Congress from the Ashtabula district. What ought I to do? Should I accept it? *Can* I honorably do so?"

Simonson was present and was eager to hear the great soldier's reply.

"I'm glad for your sake—and I certainly think you can accept with honor; and, what is more, I deem it your *duty* to do so."

Rosecrans said much more, all to the effect that strong men, loyal and true, were greatly needed at home; and that not unfrequently men who might be immensely useful as civilians, make very poor soldiers, especially officers, in the army. All of which made a very deep impression on the young lawyer's mind.

However, he was beginning to like the sound of Captain Samuel Simonson.

## CHAPTER XXV

### AT MISSIONARY RIDGE AND LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN—TAKEN PRISONER

LOOKOUT Mountain and Missionary Ridge are blood-embazoned names, but the bitterest struggle and sorest defeat of those high eminences have never been recorded.

On Missionary Ridge stood Jefferson Davis, gazing down on a land which neither himself nor his followers would ever possess.

The Chieftain had come from Richmond for two purposes: one most agreeable; the other most disagreeable.

The head of the Southern Confederacy was a trained soldier and had desired to be, not President, but Commander of the army. Not politics, but war, not statecraft but military science, were his great passions. Cæsar, rather than Cicero and Seneca; Charlemagne and Napoleon, rather than the great statesmen who adorned their reigns, were his most frequent themes of conversation.

And there were marvelous military possibilities about the cities of Knoxville and Chattanooga; Chattanooga and Lookout Valleys, Raccoon and Lookout Mountains, the Tennessee and two Chickamauga rivers; level plateaus rimmed by precipitous heights; grain fields embroidered with deep chasms whose declivities were dense with primeval forests; a vast variety of altitudes producing the most abrupt and diverse degrees of temperature and meteorological conditions, now suffocatingly hot, now exhilaratingly cool and crystallinely



clear; one moment tempestuous as the fabled realm of Pluto, the next "calm as a painted sea."

Here were massing titanic forces: on one side the armies of the Cumberland and the Tennessee, with mighty reënforcements from the Army of the Potomac, all under the command of Grant, that imperturbable and relentless Arch-Angel of the Battlefield who never hesitated to wade through goriest slaughter, however hideous and appalling, to the goal of his desire; and having as his field-m Marshals a group of generals not unworthy of Napoleon—Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Hooker, Howard, Logan; the other side commanded by—ah, there was the *rub!* And therefore Davis had hastened thither from the Confederate Capital.

There were jealousies enough among Federal officers to have caused the defeat and damnation of the Union army had they not been more than counterbalanced by the yet fiercer jealousies of the officers of the Confederacy. Alas, alas! that great and good men like McClellan, Halleck, and Rosecrans, not to mention scores of lesser lights, should have yielded to such ignoble passions; as did also Bragg, Beauregard, Longstreet, J. E. Johnston, and many of their fellow-officers. Only two of the great generals seem to have risen above the petty passions of the green-eyed monster—Grant and Lee; and we now know that even they had their profound, though usually justifiable, likes and dislikes.

There was always, however, this difference between the Northern and Southern wranglers: the Northerners always buried their animosities at the first scent of peril to the cause; the Southerners sternly carried theirs with them ever, regardless of personal peril, or peril to their cause. Even the hopes and horrors of Gettysburg could not quell the passionate jealousy and animosity of Lee's greatest field-marshal, whose hearty coöperation might, probably would, have turned the tide of battle and made Gettysburg the

mightiest and completest victory of all history—for Lee, had he been the victor, would not have permitted the results to slip through his fingers.

Thus at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge: while Grant and Sherman and Sheridan and Thomas and Hooker and Howard and Logan, with their seasoned troops from the East and the West, flushed with the victories of Vicksburg and Gettysburg, were moving with the accuracy and precision of a perfectly constructed, perfectly coördinated, and perfectly operating mechanism, Bragg and his partisans, and Longstreet with his partisans, were at swords' points; and their poor President, with all the prestige of his great name, acknowledged genius, and exalted position, could neither assuage their bitterness nor effect even a temporary truce.

Nevertheless it was a wonderful battle—October 24 and 25—amid glorious scenery, and for a pawn worthy of the gods; and the victory won was not less strategic than that at Vicksburg; and, territorially, was more decisive and important than even Gettysburg.

And the victors exulting amid the splendors above the clouds, while the heroic vanquished were grimly retreating in the gloom below, constituted a vast spectacular drama that was prophetic of an approaching victory and defeat, coronation and de-coronation, that would be *final*; for after Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga—Chattanooga, the very heart of the Southern Confederacy—there was absolutely no hope for the Government at Richmond.

Throughout the two days' battle Simonson, at the head of Company K, was with Hooker, and there was "lovely fighting all along the line."

Even to himself the young lawyer seemed to have become a new man. War, war, war—it was glorious! The noise of

battle—it was music to his soul. “The morn the marshalling in arms, the day battle’s magnificently stern array”—

“Hand to hand, and foot to foot;  
Nothing there, save death, was mute;  
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry  
For quarter, or for victory  
. . . with the volleying thunder. . . .”

Oh, it was glorious—the music of motion, the poetry of passion, the high zest of achievement! Everywhere action, action; and always forward, *forward*—so unlike limping, retreating Chickamauga—now forward, forward, double-quick, *away!*

Instead of Rosecrans and Wood, Negley, McCook and Crittenden ever retreating, now it was Grant and Sherman and Sheridan and Thomas and Hooker and Howard and Logan—Logan, the genuine *Thalassidrona*, invincible storm-petrel—ever advancing; and Longstreet, Bragg, Polk, Wheeler and Buckner, and all their hosts, once thought to be invincible, broken here, crushed there, demoralized and panic-stricken at a dozen places at once; yielding now a stand of arms, now a park of artillery, and now losing a company, regiment, entire brigade; here horseless riders, and here riderless horses, and here headless horses and headless men—but the phalanx gray, on their own soil, among their own people, fighting, struggling unto death, dying for principles dearer than their very lives, yet ever confronted by overwhelming forces which they could never evade, or hood-wink, or deceive—ever yielding, falling back, retreating.

The Federal brigades, battalions, and army-corps that had come up from New Orleans and Vicksburg, and down from Gettysburg, Henry, Donelson, Corinth, and Shiloh, were so intoxicated with the wine of victorious patriotism their eyes fairly gleamed, as though the Goddess of War had kissed



their orbs of vision and endowed them with double sight—till they could see those things which to mortals are supposed to be invisible. Especially was this the case as “Fighting Joe Hooker” and his dauntless host scaled a ladder of stars and clutched an immortal victory above the clouds—Old Glory victorious, sometimes swathed in myriad-colored mists and vapor, sometimes dancing high above the clouds; but always jubilant beneath the benediction of the skies.

“And as they gazed there crept an awe  
Through the ranks in whispers; and some men saw,  
In the antique vestments and long white hair,  
The Past of the Nation in battle there—”

such is the superstition of war.

Nor was Simonson with all his Cambridge culture and legal lore, exempt from superstitious suggestion and interpretation.

He found himself thinking of *Vergie*—ah! Vergie was the perfect epitome and throbbing incarnation of the War-Idea; and he was, or was resolved to be, in love with her. Ah, yes; stately, queenly, imperial Vergie. She was like Cleopatra—only purer; like Jeanne d’Arc—only saner; like the Russian Anne and Elizabeth—only gentler; like Hypatia—only with more poetry and passion in her nature; like the Medicean Princess, the dazzling but deadly Florentine coquette, basilisk—only all-sweet, all-good, all-desirable, *adorable*! Yes; it was perfectly plain now; he loved war because he loved Vergie Culpepper. He had absorbed her martial nature as she had yielded herself to his breast—offered him the nectar of her lips—else he, book-lover and disciple of Justinian, would not be so enamored of the glorious pomp and panoply of war.

He found himself wishing Vergie might see him leading Company K up the grim and sworded and cannon-frowning rampart, claiming victory and achieving it, and—*defying*

*death!* How proud she would be of him then—and he could see her great eyes flash, her darkly rich complexion taking on a ruddier hue, and hear her deep musical voice praising him as the deep-chested, strong-souled maiden in the German forest used to welcome and praise her lover who had done battle-royal against the hated Roman legions.

Ah, yes; and how he would cheer *her* were he to see her ride forth, radiant with all her wonderful beauty, at the head of an all-conquering host to victory—a victory that could not be gainsaid if *she* led the way.

*Expiation!* Ah, yes, he had sinned against her, against her loving trust in him, but now he was expiating his sin. Zohanozoheton herself would have confessed that he was no poltroon—that even in point of Indian-like bravery he was a manly man. And was he not defying death, and suffering privation and exposure, and enduring unspeakable fatigue on her account? But for her—*her* look, *her* rebuke, *her* open taunt—he would not have gone to war. And some day he would tell her so; and she, with a great love shining in her eyes, would say, “You poor boy,” and blame herself for everything and, in her own all-satisfying way, make reparation to him.

“Ah, yes, war is glorious”—he had become separated from his command, but following Napoleon’s advice to his generals: “Always march in the direction of the heaviest firing,” and having only Company K with him, was trying to make his way back again.

After losing considerable time he finally emerged from a forest of tangled woods and thicket only to find himself confronted by a whole brigade of Wheeler’s cavalry. Escape was impossible. Fight would have been futile, and flight would have meant instant death. It was all most inglorious, pitiful, heart-breaking—they were prisoners of war.

And under such conditions! If the Union army had been

defeated; if Grant and his legions had been driven like chaff before the tempest of Confederate valor and fury; had he been *wounded* and helpless, or better still, had he been roughly laid hold upon and borne away a prisoner while yet *unconscious*; or had he been taken only after a furious hand-to-hand struggle, Homeric, in which *some lives had been lost*—but no. As it was—how stupid, asinine, *vulgar*! Like a bevy of elderly ladies going to a fashionable afternoon function, gently, quietly, orderly, so *they* had daintily stepped into the enemy's boudoir and *been waited on*! And less than a quarter of a mile away he could hear the shouts of his victorious comrades.

Without ceremony Simonson and his comrades were disarmed and hustled to the rear. That night, in sight and sound of the boys of the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Potomac, holding high revel and carnival over their utter defeat of the Armies of the Confederacy, the young captain was marched away, under a heavy guard, to Richmond, and to —*Libby Prison*.

It was a long journey, and the conditions and accommodations were by no means ideal. His captors were neither unkind, nor exactly given to those little pleasantries and amenities with which the host usually delights to charm and entertain the guest. Matters were going wrong with their beloved Confederacy; food and raiment were scarce; their money was worthless—what wonder his captors were morose?

Much of the journey had to be made afoot, or in rough wagons impressed from the local citizenry. Many of the great railroads now connecting Richmond with Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas, were not then built; and much of the existing lines, including bridges, engines, and other rolling stock, was destroyed that they might not be of service to Federal or Confederate enemy; and as they traveled



in the zone of active military operations there were but few wagons or horses to impress.

It must be confessed that Simonson was not in a jubilant frame of mind, as he had been at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge; it is so much easier to fight as a soldier than to march as a captive, to do than to suffer. Nor was he now *en rapport* with Nature as he had been when meeting Vergie at the buckthorn tree, and taking long rides and rambles about New Richmond, else this might have been an exceedingly interesting journey.

It was autumn, and Nature was at her best. The swamps were odorous with white and yellow pine, cypress, and all manner of semi-tropic trees and shrubs. The uplands were prodigal with giant black oak, red oak, buttonwood, hickory, walnut, cherry, mulberry and crimson and golden maples. Everywhere were clusters of redberries, blueberries, scarletberries, and flowers of every hue and perfume—roses and tulips and judases and japonicas; for Nature's revels and festivals of color and odor ever go on the same whether men wake to midnight sound of strife, or "jocund drive their teams afield." The sumac flaunted her crimson banner as gloriously as though in all the land there was neither war nor rumor of war.

But none of these things gladdened the heart of Simonson, now no longer a hero but a prisoner, no longer en route to fame and glory and the warm smiles and tender embraces of a beautiful woman, but a-march, felon-like, to a taunting sentry, and a revolting cell or prison yard.

Not even skulking black bears, howling wolves, screaming wildcats, billowy rabbits, saucy barking squirrels, the whisking fox, or Mercury-like deer bounding away as though a-wing at hip and ankle, could arouse him from his deep dejection.

It must not be inferred that Simonson was really unheroic,

for that would be doing him a grave injustice. He was discouraged, but even the greatest sometimes have their seasons of depression. But he was weak and very much exhausted, a condition he had not observed amid the wild excitement prevalent in the Army of the Cumberland from Chickamauga to Missionary Ridge. Had he consulted prudence instead of a very mad and unhappy impulse he would not have gone to war, at least before he had recovered his strength—least of all, plunged into such a mad vortex of excitement and almost superhuman endeavor as marked the Chickamauga-Chattanooga campaign.

As a result of all these imprudences he finally fell ill, though at first not seriously. However, before reaching Weldon, South Carolina, Col. Thomas E. Rose, of the 77th Pennsylvania Volunteers, a fellow-captive, informed the commanding officer that Captain Simonson needed medical attention; but the young lawyer made light of his condition, and as Colonel Rose soon after made his escape nothing came of it. Nevertheless he gradually grew worse and, although now receiving every possible attention, presently developed a high fever and symptoms of both typhoid and pneumonia. Fortunately by this time they had reached Danville and were able to take him the rest of the way by rail, a ride of only a few hours. Thus it happened that the young lawyer, upon his arrival at Richmond, was taken directly to the Libby Prison Hospital.

The skilled physicians in attendance easily diagnosed his case—brain fever with malaria, aggravated by exposure and over-exertion. His condition was not thought to be serious. Young, not dissipated, bronzed by outdoor life—of course he would soon recover.

Of medicine they had but little. The blockade of the Confederacy now was complete and the Government at Washington had declared all medicines "contraband." Not

even for the healing, or allaying of the sufferings of Union prisoners would the Federal authorities permit any medicine whatsoever to enter the Confederacy.

"The poor fellow ought to have some aconite or belladonna," the doctors said, "but his own government forbids them. We've repeatedly offered the Lincoln Government the medicines' weight in gold and the unrestricted liberty and privilege here of Federal physicians and surgeons to come and go at will, and minister with their own hands solely to their own sick and wounded Federal soldiers, but our offers have been persistently spurned."

This was early in the evening. Toward midnight Simonson grew seriously worse, talking incoherently and disturbing the other patients. One of them, asleep when Simonson was brought in, now awoke. Something about the delirious patient—some accent, pronunciation, or peculiar rhythm of speech—arrested his attention.

"I say, Sister," addressing a sweet-faced, low-voiced daughter of the church, "who is the new arrival?"

"I don't know, Harold. He was brought in several hours ago. Have you rested well? You've had a nice long sleep."

"Yes, Sister, thanks to you and the delicious gruel you brought me; but tell me—who *is* the poor devil over there? Seems to me I recognize his voice."

"Won't you have some more of the gruel? I can warm it for you in just a minute. Maybe then you'll go to sleep again."

"Sister Angela, you're just like Mother. Are all women alike? When I say, 'Mother, please let me have another piece of mince pie,' she's sure to say, 'Oh, how delicious this cup custard is! Won't you have some, dear?' Or if I want more fried oysters she's sure to go into ecstasies over egg-plant. Now, Sister Angela, who's that fellow over there that's calling for—for—*Saint Peter*, I reckon?"



The gentle Sister smiled. She liked her pale-faced, impulsive patient. He reminded her of her only brother, a brave and gentle lad, who was killed at Antietam, fighting under the standard of Davis and Lee.

"Say, Sister," her patient continued, "won't you please ask the—the *rooster* that—I mean the clerk of this *tavern*? He'll know."

"Yes, Harold; but I don't know but it's against the rules."

"Oh, *shoot* the rules! I beg your pardon, Sister. I didn't mean to say that. But he'll tell you. I couldn't refuse *you* anything."

A moment later the Sister returned and took her seat, a sweetly quizzical smile parting her lips.

"Well? Are you going to play mother on me some more? Ask me if I wouldn't like to know who *did* kill Jack the Giant-Killer?"

"No, Harold, I won't tease you any more. His name is Samuel Simonson."

"The *hell* you say! Oh, I do beg your pardon, Sister, a thousand times. But my blessed old Rebel father, everybody calls him 'Quoth Horace,' says it so often—don't mean anything at all by it—that somehow I've got into the habit myself. But say, Sister, can't you find out *who* he is? I used to know a chap by that name 'way back in God's own country—that's up North, you know."

"But please, Harold—you're exciting yourself. Won't you, *please*, go to sleep now? I'd give you a sleeping powder if I had one."

"There you go again—just like Mother. I'll tell you what I'll do: *when* you find out for me all about my poor suffering comrade over there, *then* I'll go to sleep, honest, cross my heart, hope to drop dead this minute, mena, mena, mina, moke—you're *it*! Now then, Sis——"

But the sentence was not completed. The stranger suddenly raised himself on the couch to a sitting posture and, stretching forth both arms, exclaimed, "Vergie, Vergie, you know that I love you. Why do you still hate me so? Verg——"

Instantly Harold Culpepper was off his cot and at the other cot in time to catch "Sammy" as he was falling.

"Simonson, old man, don't you know *me*?"

The familiar greeting, so warm and genuine, for the moment arrested his attention and he looked up eagerly.

"Seems I ought to know you," he groaned, his mind again drifting away. "Do you know where Vergie is? She hates me, and I want—want—her to——"

"No, Vergie doesn't hate you, old boy. Vergie's my sister, and I know she thinks heaps and *heaps* of you."

Sister Angela had now approached, and was trying to persuade her patient to return to his cot.

"Who—who's that?" again the querulous voice was speaking. "T—that's Marjorie, isn't it? Har'ld's Marj'ry—but I w—ant Vergie—was fight—f'r——"

At last Simonson was quieted, and presently fell asleep. Harold, however, was wide-eyed. An hour later he said in a low voice, "Sister Angela, you see I just can't sleep. May I talk to you a little bit if I whisper ever and ever so low?"

"Only if it's for the good of your soul, Harold. We are not permitted to indulge in frivolous conversation."

"I *qualify*!" he whispered, smiling. "What I have to say is for the good of my soul—*plus*!"

The Sister bent low to listen. It must have been a story with a grip, a world of human interest, for the pious saint listened intently. It was all about Simonson: what a "poor devil" he was, but a "cracking good fellow;" born of the "oneryest" parents, but himself "all wool, a yard wide, warranted not to shine or shrink or fade and not a yellow thread

in warp or woof; gentle as a babe, but brave as a lion and could "whip his weight in wild cats;" tenacious as Fate to what he thought was right, but genial toward everybody as sunshine—and unselfish as dew and rain; modest as a girl, but gifted as Daniel Webster; for the Union "teeth and toe-nails," but "so white and honor-bright" that even the New Richmond Rebels liked him; how that he knew his sister Vergie liked him and was only afraid that he, Simonson, wasn't going to take a "shine" to her—and on and on.

"Sister Angela, what I can't understand is, what's come between my sister and Simonson; and why this afternoon she didn't mention Simonson's going to the War. Of course, I was all knocked out when she showed up here so unexpectedly—Oh, yes, it was yesterday afternoon now. What the dickens do you suppose Vergie's doing down here anyway? But Lord! Didn't she show her *fangs* and raise her *bristles* when I casually mentioned Simonson? Something's wrong, and it's on Vergie's side of the house, too. I'll tell you, Sister, if Simonson wants Vergie he's got her brother's consent *now*. Another thing, Sister Angela: Vergie's got to come here and take care of Simonson."

"But Harold, she wouldn't be permitted to——"

"Why not? She's as big a Rebel as any of you. And His Royal Highness down at Brockenborough Castle, Twelfth and Clay, is Vergie's *Unk!* Do you think His Royal Nibs'll go back on his own kinfolks? And ain't he the Boss of this Job, and the Ruler of the Ranch besides?"

Sister Angela was amused at her patient's positiveness, and impatience with what he termed "red tape."

"But, Harold," with a slight twitching at the corners of her lips, "haven't you gone back on *your* kinfolks just a wee bit, even on 'His Royal Nibs?'" now laughing.

"Oh, hel—hade—dad-gum—holy jumping Jupiter! There, Sister, I came awfully near saying it again, but *didn't*. Don't



you think I'm in a state of *grace*? Oh, yes—well, so far as Uncle Jeffey and I are concerned *we* don't trot in the same harness, as I guess you'uns," whimsically dropping into the dialect of the street, "will find out if you live long enough."

## CHAPTER XXVI

### VERGIE CULPEPPER IN RICHMOND—MEETS THE YOUNG LAWYER

NO statesman ever surpassed Mr. Davis in sincerity, not even Mr. Lincoln; and, of course, Mr. Lincoln was the great Mississippian's inferior in technical scholarship, military training and experience, and the knowledge that comes from long service in Congress and President's cabinet and the resultant intercourse and intimate acquaintance with the most gifted, cultured, and forceful men in all walks of life.

Mr. Lincoln was victor not because his was the more exalted character, or because he was the sincerer or more learned man, but because, untouched by a waning feudal system nor being interested therein, he had, on that one matter, the more accurate ethical instinct and the keener prophetic vision; and the Union Army triumphed not because it was favored by Providence—Providence has a shrewd way of always siding in with the strongest battalions and the expertest generals—or because the Confederate Army was accursed of God, but because it was better armed, clothed, and fed than the Confederate Army and outnumbered the Confederate Army two to one, and once, as Mr. Lincoln pointed out to McClellan, three to one.

On the other hand, Davis was not Lincoln's equal in diplomacy. He also lacked Lincoln's salving and resilient humor; and though capable of winning and retaining the intensest friendships—witness Lee's and Benjamin's and Albert Sidney Johnston's and Stonewall Jackson's devotion to Davis—

he was by nature incapable of utilizing the lure of heart-grappling *camaraderie*, a gift so richly possessed by Jackson, Clay, Lincoln and, later on, by Blaine, Garfield, Cleveland and McKinley.

Mr. Davis was intensely religious, almost to asceticism; was a great student with much of the taste and inclination of the recluse; was by heredity and social connection an aristocrat and cavalier of the Sir Philip Sidney and the Younger Disraeli types whom, in social bearing, he greatly resembled; and was a sore victim of chronic neuralgia—rheumatism of the nerves—which was greatly aggravated by his seven years' arduous service in the Federal Army in Northern Missouri, Northern Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Then, too, the wound he received at the battle of Buena Vista, performing one of the most heroic acts in the annals of American warfare, never entirely healed, and sorely troubled him to the last.

During the awful '61-'65 quadrennium there were whole weeks when Mr. Davis was constantly confined to his bed, all knowledge of which was carefully kept from the public; and during those periods, tried as few men are tried, and periled by a downfall and obloquy such as few men ever faced, he himself confessed to, and deeply deplored, an irascibility of temper that sometimes mastered him.

It was during one of these periods of excruciating pain that Mr. James Perry, his private secretary, informed him that a young lady, claiming to be a kinsman, desired to have an interview, and refused to be dismissed till her request was granted.

"A woman? Oh, these women! Tell Varina that she must see her."

"Mrs. Davis and the children are out, Mr. President."

"Sure enough. Oh, to have Stephens, Brown, Vance, Seaton, Hunter, Rhett, Pryor, Toombs, Yancey, Pollard,



the Confederate Congress, and a score of quarrelsome generals on one's hands is sufficient to run one crazy—and now a *woman*! And yet," reflecting a moment, "no gentleman can deny a lady's request. What's her name, Perry?"

"Here's her card, Mr. President. Miss Virginia Lee——"

"Ah, Perry, that sounds good. God bless the mothers! And how sacred and suggestive the names they give their babies! No one could question the loyalty of this girl's mother—*Virginia*. Lee? Did you say—*Lee*? Wonder if she's a relative of our Robert?" looking up into the face of his private secretary.

"Mr. President, you didn't give me time to read the entire name. It's Virginia Lee Culpepper, New Richmond, Illinois."

Instantly the President was wrathful. "Oh, h——" He didn't complete the expletive. "Perry, a good big round fat juicy red-hot oath must be a great comfort to men sometimes. If Bishop Johns would grant me a dispensation to swear *occasionally*, and could qualify as to his authority to do so, I think it would immensely improve my health; or if I could appoint Toombs *Cusser-General*! He's such an *artist* in the use of profanity, and exercises his gift with such a relish, such an *enthusiasm*."

"But, Mr. President, who is this beautiful young lady?"

"Perry, *all* women are beautiful, and most of them are *fools*. Who is she? Charlotte Culpepper's daughter—that cousin of mine in Southern Illinois with whom I once committed the amazing indiscretion of carrying on a correspondence. Son, never write to a woman. She'll show your letters—can't help it; or lose, or misplace, them; or misdirect her's to you. And she has no receptacle for secrets, as our congressmen have learned to *my* sorrow, and to *their* *chagrin*. Why, Perry, one can't kiss a pretty woman but—

well, she just must *blab!*" Then, wearily: "Oh, show her in. Tell her I shall be *happy* to see her."

A moment later Vergie was admitted.

"Ah, Miss Culpepper," all trace of illness and irritation now gone, "I believe this is the first time I have had the honor of meeting you," taking her hand. "Pray be seated. I trust your precious mother, my cousin beloved, is well, and that——"

"Mr. President, Mama is dead."

The President had not observed her extreme pallor, and that she was dressed in deep mourning.

"Dead? Cousin Charlotte *dead*? This is, indeed, most sorrowful intelligence. Pray tell me about it. Why was I not informed sooner?"

Vergie's eyes filled with tears which she bravely, but unsuccessfully, strove to conceal. Calming herself as soon as possible she related everything to her famous kinsman; her mother's long illness; her great sufferings; and, at the last, her beautiful resignation to the inevitable. The President was deeply moved, not only by her narrative, but also by her quiet dignity, elevation of soul, and unmistakable sorrow. After expressing his sympathy, in language and manner leaving nothing to be desired because nothing was lacking, he said:

"And your father? Tell me about our dear Quoth Horace. I trust he's as well as could be expected, considering the irreparable loss he has sustained."

Very quietly Vergie responded, but with no lack of enthusiasm, telling of her father's loyalty to the "Cause," his open hostility to the Lincoln *regime*, and the persecutions he had suffered.

"But, Cousin Virginia——"

"Call me 'Vergie,' please. It's shorter and I like it better.

'Twas Mama who was your cousin; and I'm not worthy to take her place."

There was no pretence in her voice or manner, and the President said to himself, "Blood will tell."

"Besides," she added with a wan smile, "I'm not worthy of being *your cousin*. Some day I may become so; then I shall request the honor of being so addressed."

The President gave her a quick look, but made no reply.

"I was about to say, Vergie, that you've not told me everything you and your father have suffered for my sake, and for the sake of our Cause. Tell me, please, about the *mob*. You see, we occasionally get the Northern papers."

Again the tears came to her eyes, and her face crimsoned. "Oh, the shame of it," she said to herself. "Does everybody know about that, too?"

Nevertheless, she nerved herself for the ordeal and, strengthened and comforted by the President's sympathizing countenance, related all the circumstances of the outrage.

"And now, Vergie, that big fine brother of your's! Do you know I've always felt a little miffed at Cousin Charlotte because she didn't name him for me?—Jefferson instead of Harold. However,

'What's in a name? that which we call a rose,

By any other name would smell as sweet.'

"I doubt not he's giving a good account of himself these troublous times. Let's see, Harold's now twenty-five?"

"Yes, Mr. President."

"And a brave soldier, of course?"

"Yes"—very faintly.

"An officer, I presume? It would be impossible to keep a Culpepper in the ranks."

"No, Mr. President," now scarcely above a whisper, "my brother is just a private soldier." She had forgotten that he was a Major in the *Union* army.



"I'm astonished! Charlotte's son a private? Culpepper talent going to waste. I'll attend to that tomorrow. If Lincoln can make Frank Blair, a man who never fired a gun, or belonged to a college cadet-corps, or trained a day in the militia, a full-fledged general; and exacting stubborn-headed Grant will accept *raw* material for a staff officer, I guess I can do something for Charlotte's son. Tomorrow he'll put on a Brigadier-General's uniform, and take his place on Bobby Lee's staff."

"But, Mr. President——" Vergie was greatly distressed. She had come to tell the President about her brother, and to beg for his pardon; and, failing in that, to obtain permission to nurse him through his illness, but hadn't expected the conversation to take such a turn. Astonished at her agitation, and divining its only conceivable significance, at least from a man's standpoint, the President said, "Is Harold sick?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. President," she exclaimed, seeing herself helpless to shape the conversation, or to choose the manner of making the revelation that could not be other than very shocking to the President, "my brother Harold is very sick; and I want you to grant me permission to nurse him back to health," the latter an afterthought. As a matter of fact Harold was not *very* sick, though at the time it seemed to her he was.

"Where is your brother, Vergie? In the hospital?"

"Y-yes, Mr. President."

"Saint Mary's?"

"N-no, Mr. President. Not there."

"Where, then? Was he in the Army of Northern Virginia? Where is he now?"

"Oh, Mr. President," no longer able to keep back the terrible truth, "my brother went—w-went *wrong*. It wasn't our fault, indeed *it* wasn't. Papa hasn't been the same since

it happened; and it k-killed poor Mama. And I'm so sorry, too! Nor was it Brother's fault altogether—he was over-persuaded. You know how men do. They got around Brother and made him believe that black's white, and that white's black, and that y-you were a *f-fiend*, and that to be a Rebel was worse than to be a *horse thief*; and then he had a g-girl named Marjorie, and—and she turned *Union*, and s-so, of course——”

“That will do, Vergie. ‘Of course’ is a fitting close for all conversations, arguments, dialogues, debates, and orations on women. When woman comes in, reason always goes out. If I could smuggle our Southern girls over into the Union army, and keep them there twenty-four hours, they'd lead every bald-headed and woolly-headed Unionist right over into the Confederate camp.”

“And how if that old ogre at Washington were to smuggle our *Northern* girls over into *your* army?” dashing the tears from her eyes and looking up, saucily, into the President's face.

“If *you* are a fair *sample* of the Northern girls I'd advise that old ‘ogre’ you mention to quit drafting men and go to drafting *girls*. But say nothing about this; for if Lincoln were to do that Lee and the other generals might just as well surrender at once, for not a man-jack could, or would, try to resist the girls.

“But now, Miss Vergie,” more seriously, “where is this renegade brother of your's, this real, for-sure *Rebel*. To think that one of *our* family should become a *Rebel*! Why, it's an everlasting disgrace.”

Vergie glanced up quickly, but saw the President was only indulging in a bit of pleasantry. “Nevertheless, Mr. President,” she spoke up loyally, “he's the finest brother in the world, and I want your permission to go and take care of him.”

"But you haven't told me yet where he is."

"Right here in Richmond, Mr. President. In fact, just now he's your nearest neighbor, and you've not been very sociable."

"Harold Culpepper, Charlotte's Harold, in Libby Prison? And I not know it? My God!"

"Truth is, Mr. President, Brother's very modest, and's here strictly *incog*. He really doesn't wish to be *lionized*, not even by his illustrious kinsman. But for Albert Levering, another New Richmond boy gone wrong, even I shouldn't know of his presence here. We're pretty stubborn, you know, and we've a whole lot of self-esteem. *I*, his sister, am de che-i-ld wot bends de knee tu de Te-i-runt; 'tis *I* dat pleads wit' Your Maijestee tew spe-a-re me brudder!"

The weary President smiled at her jest.

"No; my brother," she resumed seriously, "is ill and has been removed from the prison proper, to the Hospital annex. He's being beautifully cared for by Sister Angela; but now that Mama's gone I naturally want to take her place. I understand Brother, and can do better for him than any stranger could do. And then I'm very sorrowful, and must have something to engage my mind."

"Where are you stopping, Vergie?"

"At the Spotswood Hotel, Mr. President."

"Get ready at once to come here. I will send for your things. I'll order my carriage to convey you back to the hotel."

"But, *Mr. President*——"

"That's settled. Do you suppose that Fairfax or Charlotte would have allowed me, or any member of my family, to stop at your hotel had we come to New Richmond?"

"I should *hope* not," Vergie replied. She was thinking of Nic Tutwiler and his red-headed wife, and the tavern they kept.



"Neither shall you stop at the Spotswood, though that's an excellent house. The Brockenborough Mansion shall be your home as long as you can be prevailed on to remain; and I trust we shall be honored with your presence a long while. When you return from the hotel we'll also plan for your brother's comfort."

"Oh, I'm as happy as a bird," she chirruped, as she was handed into the carriage by the President himself. But instead of saying to the driver, "To the Spotswood, Eighth and Main," she simply said, "Carey Street and Twentieth—I'll tell you when to stop," her destination being Libby Prison Hospital. She must immediately acquaint her brother with the good news.

The guard at the door was uncertain regarding the validity of her pass, some "i" not being dotted or "t" crossed, and finally refused to admit her.

"But I *must* be admitted," she said. "Why, my *brother's* in there."

"Poorest excuse possible, dear lady. We haven't a very high opinion of the *gentlemen* in there, and we're naturally a trifle suspicious when a *relative*, I beg your pardon, seeks admission."

Vergie was on the verge of tears, both wrath and disappointment, when Major Turney, the commandant, arrived, accompanied by E. W. Ross, clerk of the prison, Adjutant Latouche, and Sergeant Stansil of the 18th Georgia.

"Certainly, admit the lady," said Major Turney. "Don't you see she came in the President's carriage? Indeed, I just saw the President at the Brockenborough hand her into the carriage." Then to Adjutant Latouche, "My, but the President looked sick! That devilish neuralgia."

Vergie flew to the hospital; but before she could begin the recital of what she had accomplished, and hoped to accomplish, Harold broke out, saying:

"Vergie, you can't guess who's come." Harold was so happy and enthusiastic she forgot, for a moment, what it meant to "come" to Libby Prison. Then, "Must be some enemy of your's; surely you couldn't wish for a friend to become your fellow-guest."

"Don't moralize, Sister. Why I'm happier than a—*a* basket of *snakes*! Just look over there on cot 14."

Vergie looked, and when it dawned on her that she was in Simonson's presence it seemed that her blood was turning into globules of fire.

"O Harold, I hate him, hate him, hate him! Why is he here?"

Harold was too accustomed to his sister's sudden "squalls" to be disturbed or astonished.

"Sister, dear," very quietly, but with the light of a loving regard glowing in his eyes, "he's here for the same reason your distinguished brother's here. He's a prisoner of war."

"What, that *thing* a soldier?" Her voice was raucous with contempt.

"Evidently very much of a soldier. In his first battle jumped from private to captain; next leap I guess he'll be a brigadier-general, if he ever gets out of here. Just saw Colonel Rose of the 77th Pennsylvania, who was with him at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. *He* says this—this Justinian's a *hell* of a fighter, and a three-masted genius. Tried to think of *four*, but let it go at that."

"I don't care, Harold, I hate him—old Abe Simonson's son, cracker, po' white trash—*scum*!"

"Look here, Sister, not another word out of you! He's the whitest fellow in Raleigh County and I won't allow you or anybody else to abuse him, at least in my presence. I'm a Culpepper, but I don't belong in his class—he's clear above me. Why, his little finger's worth more than all the jumping-jack, top-lofty Felix Palfreys, and Rod Clarkes,

and Calhoun Leverings you could chuck in the Atlantic Ocean; and I say you'd be mighty lucky if you could *land* him. He's the only laddy-buck I ever saw that I'd be willing to recognize as a brother-in-law; and here's my two Cincinnati sugar-cured to welcome him any time he hoves in sight in that capacity."

"But, Harold, you don't understand. It's Marjorie he wants," thinking to put her brother "to sleep" at a single blow.

"That's another lie, Missey Spitfire. He's welcome to Marjorie as far as I'm concerned; but I tell you he's been in love with you ever since—well, you know when—that first night at The Elms."

"I hate to contradict my gentle and pious brother," in a tone she always liked to counter with, "but I *know* he never so much as thought of me."

"But I *know better*, Vergie. What was he doing here last night? Holding out his arms, and calling for you like a—*a calf.bawlin' for its maw.*"

Vergie now was sure Harold was joking, and was happy to see him in a merry mood. It showed that he was convalescent.

"And what was Samlinson Jackinson saying, Harold?"

"You can make all the fun you please, Vergie, but I tell you it was pretty damned pitiful. Even Sister Angela, used to this sort of thing all the time, couldn't keep back her tears. Vergie, you're a tough ticket, and I don't think you're worthy of such a royal fellow as Simonson."

"But what did he *say*, Harold?"

"Are you in fun, Vergie, or in earnest?"

"I don't care to be catechised, Harold, but I'll answer you. I'm neither. He's too silly to be funny; and he's too *trashy* to regard seriously. I'm simply indifferent. Tell me or not, just as you please."



"Well, Sister, I'm glad I'm not like you. I *do* care. And I'm going to tell you about Comrade Simonson, and you can't bluff me out of it. Last night, after the old sawbones were gone and he was nearer dead than alive, all at once he sat up on his cot, held out his arms like this, and said: 'O Vergie, I want you. If it hadn't been for you I'd never gone to war—and I wanted you all the time.' And I thought it was Marjorie he wanted and somehow had your names tangled in his feverish noggin. So I brought Sister Angela, you know she looks a good deal like Marjorie, and I said, 'Here, old boy; here's your Marjorie.' And he looked at her a moment, then shoved her *away*, and began crying pitifuler than ever, 'O Vergie, Vergie, I want you! I've wanted you all the time!'"

Vergie mused in silence. What could it all mean? She couldn't doubt her brother's word—but! That night—when he thought, when they all thought, he was dying! And she was in such distress—*shame!* When her heart was breaking. Before the mocking mob she had flung herself down at his side, doubting nothing; and *he* had gasped—"Marjorie!" And given his hand to—Marjorie! And what had seemed to be his dying smile and love-look he had bestowed on—Marjorie! And now—

Harold thought his sister was softening. Reaching over and taking her hand, very gently, he said, "Sister, you know how I love Simonson. He's such a corking good fellow, and I want you, too, to like him. Won't you please, just for Harold's sake, give the poor devil a chance? I know you're all the world to him."

With a voice deep, sepulchral, almost ghostly, like the low booming of the bells of Fate in the Tower of Eternity, "Impossible, Brother, dear. It's too late now. And, apart from my own feelings, my dying mother pledged me—a vow

to one dead and therefore cannot be cancelled—never, in any way, to have anything to do with Samuel Simonson.”

The young soldier almost fainted. “O Vergie, is my precious mother dead? You didn’t tell me yesterday.”

“Nor did I mean to tell you to-day, Harold. It was a slip of the tongue. I didn’t think you were able to bear it yet. O Harold, Brother, I’m so sorry for you. But our angel mother left you her blessing.”

And the two, now in each other’s arms, gave way to their tears.

Vergie then told her brother of their beautiful mother’s triumphant death, and of her loving remembrance of him, and prayers for him, down almost to her last breath.

Presently she told him of her visit to the Executive Mansion, and of her interview with President Davis.

“And I’m sure, Harold, the President will get you out of here, and give you decent, comfortable quarters, and a whole lot of good things to eat. Now, be real patient till I return and I’ll tell you all about it.”

Vergie was tripping toward the exit when Harold called: “See here, Vergie; Simonson and I are comrades, and I’m going to see him through. Don’t make any arrangements for *me* that don’t include *him*.”

“But, Harold, I can’t—don’t you see? He isn’t one of us. What can I tell the President? Why, he’s no more to us than——”

“There, that’ll do, Vergie. Call it all off! Don’t care anything about Uncle Jeffey anyway—see things differently since I’ve been soldiering. But—you must always count *Simonson* in where *I’m* concerned.”

Vergie for the second time was about to take her leave when Simonson, twenty feet distant, began to show signs of waking.

“Be decent to him, Vergie. Remember that back in New

Richmond he saved your *bacon* two or three times; and that, too, when help was mighty *scarce*."

Simonson slowly opened his eyes, and Harold was instantly off his cot and over to "14."

"Better? See it already! Hard to kill a Southern Illinois *hazel-splitter*! Here, Comrade, we've got company to-day. See! Vergie's come to see you."

To Vergie's mystification Simonson held out his hands, very thin and feverish, and said: "Vergie, I'm so glad——" and fell asleep again.

Vergie rode to the Spotswood as one in a confused dream—angry, yet softening; for in truth the young lawyer had been the one great passion of her life. "What *does* he mean?" she queried. "What does *anything* mean? Why——" She tried to find answers to her many "whys," but couldn't.

"Why—but what's the use?" she mused. *That* night at The Elms when, all a-flutter, she had called him to her room to hear about the *mob*. She smiled at her attempted self-deception. It had *not* been for that purpose—the precious secret lay hidden deep in her heart—for she had eagerly listened to his recital to Quoth Horace in the hall below of every incident.

She thought of that other *night*—inken black, but now luminous in her memory, when she had warned him of Colonel Morton's peril from the Knights of the Golden Circle; and he had accompanied her home from his office; and what had "happened" under the elm trees before they parted.

That *day*—jewel-day on the rosary of her years—at the buckthorn tree. Then there was a blur of days and nights—but, oh, it had all been like heaven. He had been such an ardent lover, yet always so gentle, chivalrous, mindful of all the thousand decencies that mean so much to woman. He had *given* all she desired, and *taken* all it was his right



to take, and never once had transgressed. He was so—vital, yet so—honorable. She breathed deeply and her blood tingled. Yes, it had been just like—heaven. *O-o-o-h!*

Then something *had* happened. Again she heard, in imagination, the roar of the mob, the crashing in of windows and the breaking down of doors, the cruel *thud* of a drayman's gnarled and knotted fist on her father's face, the hissing and crackling of flames leaping heavenward, the vile threats and curses, and then a—*revolver*.

Oh, yes—it all came to her now. *There—then*, he had put her to open *shame—Marjorie*. Vergie's lips now were bloodless, so tensely were they drawn, so consumed was she with rage. *O-o-h—and yet?*

What had Harold said? "Calling for Vergie. Didn't want Marjorie at all. Always—Vergie, *Vergie!*"

After all—her muscles were beginning to relax, and she sighed deeply—maybe she had wronged him. Sometimes dying people are confused—often she had heard her father say so, dear old Quoth Horace. Maybe the terrible bullet wound, and the awful agony—*everything*—had confused, bewildered him. What wonder? Poor boy!

Yes—strange she had not thought of it before. He had been used to seeing Marjorie. Somehow he and the Judge, Marjorie's father, were partners. Fred, Marjorie's brother, and he were such close friends. And—why he had never gone with Marjorie, kept company with her—more like brother and sister! What more natural than for him to say Marjorie when he *meant* Vergie? This seemed altogether reasonable. To all this must now be added his present speech and actions, and what Harold had said—and Harold, after all, was wonderfully *knowing*. And *Harold* had said, "Vergie, you're all the world to Simonson," and a whole lot more to the same effect. And again: "Vergie, he's the only man I ever saw that I'd be willing for you to

marry—both hands are always open to welcome him as my brother-in-law.” Wasn’t that lovely of Harold?—dear, blustering, sometimes just *awful* Harold! What if it all, after all, should come to pass?

“O-o-h! Brother-in-law! That means for Simonson to become my *husband*; I, Simonson’s—wife. No, no—mother! My promise to the—*dead*. Such vows must *not* be broken, and *cannot* be expunged; for the person to whom made, the only person who could pronounce absolution, is dead.”

Vergie was late at the hotel, but the President’s man was waiting.

When Vergie reached the Executive Mansion, Mrs. Davis and the children had returned from their orientation drive, and now joined with the President in welcoming the guest of whom they “had always heard such nice things.”

“Now, Vergie,” said the President, a little later, “I’ve had to cut enough red-tape to reach from here to that *rebellious* Capitol yonder on the Potomac in order to help out that *rebel* brother of yours—for you see he’s rebelled against *his* folks, and *my* folks, and *your* folks, and *our* folks, and that takes in about everybody.

“I wanted to bring Harold here at once, but my grave and august Cabinet said it couldn’t be done. They ransacked the law books from Lycurgus to Justice Taney and couldn’t find a single precedent to justify me in a course they declared to be so extraordinary. Benjamin—our Judah P.—thought he could find, not exactly a precedent, but an analogous case, in the reign of Antiochus the Fourth. He said if that turned out all right, I could “abduct” my nephew; otherwise I couldn’t. I held my breath, yet couldn’t see what old *Auntie* did three or four thousand years ago had to do with this case here and now——”

“But, Uncle Jeff,” Vergie said, with mock gravity, “aren’t

we *strict* constructionists? And don't we stand by the *Fathers* at all hazards, come life, come death? And isn't it horrid to run things to suit ourselves, law or no law, as Mr. *Micawber* might be doing right *now* if he were President of the United—ah—*Duchies of New Guinea*?"

"No interruptions, please," merrily responded President Davis. "Children should be seen, *not* heard. Besides, this is not a Mrs. Stowe, or E. Cady Stanton, or Miss Anthony rally. Well, as I was about to remark, Seaton, my *amiable* War Secretary, has *graciously* relieved me of my dilemma by designating Brockenborough House as one of the 'Official Prisons.' You can see now, Miss Vergie, what a convenience it would be to take the reins of government quietly into my own hands and *rule* as *Dictator*, instead of sitting here a nominal President, bantered and badgered and—*helpless*."

There was a momentary stern look in the President's eyes, and an iron purpose in his voice, that Vergie never forgot.

But Vergie dreaded to encroach on the President's hospitality and boundless chivalry by mentioning that her brother had a comrade from whom he refused to be separated—besides, it might involve the cutting of more red-tape.

In this, however, her fears were immediately set at rest. "Most assuredly," said the President, "have Harold bring his comrade with him. Isn't this an 'Official Prison'? And of course *you* can vouch for this comrade of your brother's—*can you*?"

Vergie herself was astonished at the enthusiasm with which she replied: "He's another of *our* rebels—but he's the soul of honor; and I can vouch for him boundlessly."

To which the President, with a gleam of humor in his weary eyes, quietly remarked, "Is *that* all?"

Vergie wondered just what the President meant, but felt



the color rising in her face. She was glad that at that moment Mrs. Davis bore her away to meet some distinguished callers, among others, Mrs. Robert Toombs, and Mrs. John Slidell, wife of the Confederate Commissioner to France.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### DR. CULPEPPER AT RICHMOND—VERGIE'S SORE TRIAL

**M**R. CULPEPPER finally had done the logical thing—closed The Elms and followed his daughter to the Confederate Capitol. His home was desolate, his neighbors were hostile, and his practice, which had survived the first two years of the war, had abruptly ceased entirely with his celebration of the Union defeat at Fredericksburg; after that, both from policy and hatred, every door was closed against him. With Charlotte Culpepper sleeping at Oakwood Cemetery, and Virginia Lee at Richmond, there was every reason why he should quit the scenes and associations that constantly revived and intensified bitter memories, and elsewhere seek a social atmosphere and environment that would be both healing and consoling.

Between President Davis and Dr. Culpepper there were many mutual ties of affection and bonds of interest. Both were Kentuckians, veterans of the Mexican War, and thoroughgoing aristocrats; both were high-minded, cultivated gentlemen, fond of the classics, and reverent of the opinions of a great and august antiquity; and, finally, Mrs. Culpepper, of precious memory, had been the President's nearest and dearest kinswoman, and for many years a cherished correspondent.

Even in temperament President Davis and Dr. Culpepper were much alike: noble after the manner of Marcus Aurelius, chivalrous after the manner of Sir Philip Sydney, but at times impatient, dictatorial, irascible—though the Presi-

dent had schooled himself to a self-control that led many to think he was a grim and unemotional stoic. In this they were mistaken. To the contrary, Mr. Davis was exceedingly sensitive, resented a personal affront with extraordinary bitterness, and perhaps never forgave an injury.

Nevertheless, Mr. Davis was an idealist, and his ideals were very high. He had the misfortune to be an unsuccessful revolutionist, which constituted him a "traitor," his heroic compatriots "rebels," and the whole great movement, of which he was the unwilling head, "an infamous conspiracy against liberty and humanity"—but no man ever truthfully accused him of falsehood, hypocrisy, financial or political dishonesty, disloyalty to a friend or an ideal, shunning a duty, evading a responsibility, or personal cowardice.

Even his judgments of men, with all his haughtiness and imperiousness, were singularly gentle and generous—as was also his personal bearing toward them. Toombs, who, after February 8, 1861, is said never to have spoken of Mr. Davis in other than terms of utmost disrespect and disparagement, was invited to a seat in his Cabinet; Rhett, Pryor and Yancey, always notoriously malignant toward him, he lauded as great men, and unfailingly mentioned in terms of utmost consideration; Bragg, Beauregard and J. E. Johnston, who thwarted him in every way, and often made his life miserable, he forgave without solicitation, at least ethically and officially, and favored beyond their personal or military merits. Even the Brutus-like thrusts of Governors Vance and Brown, and Vice-President Stephens, never swayed him from his high poise as a Christian gentleman, or provoked him to words or acts of retaliation—at which Dr. Culpepper often marveled.

Wit is biting, and stings; humor is soothing, and heals. Both are intellectual gifts, but possess no *moral* quality. Indeed, the wit may be worthier than the humorist. But



the wit is doomed to isolation, while the humorist always has a strong personal following. It was the gift of *humor* that gave to Lincoln an army of adorers, while Davis, the wit, was left to walk *alone*—besides, Mr. Davis' constant ill-health was always against him; also the wound that never healed, received at the Battle of Buena Vista.

Mr. Davis keenly felt his isolation, but was temperamentally unable to escape from it. He dwelt apart. His native atmosphere was too cold, and his intellectual pleasures and pursuits were too high and remote, for the multitude. And yet, to the few who understood, and were able to appreciate, him—such as Lee, Benjamin, Albert Sidney Johnston, Stonewall Jackson, Polk, the Bishop-General of Louisiana—he was constantly and altogether delightful.

Dr. Culpepper arrived at Richmond shortly after Harold's and the young lawyer's removal to Mr. Davis' residence. The President wanted the doughty Doctor to be his guest at Brockenborough Mansion, but the cordial invitation was declined.

"You already have Vergie and my renegade son, and we must not abuse your too generous hospitality; besides, the Spotswood House is convenient, and I can frequently drop in on you and the children."

It was not easy for the haughty cavalier Kentuckian to be reconciled to his Union soldier son, and Vergie's diplomacy was taxed to the utmost. Possibly she would have failed but for the counsels and example of the President.

"Harold is already half-orphaned," said President Davis, "and it would be cruel, Fairfax, for you to hold out against him."

But more potent still was the President's example. No honored guest of the Confederacy could have been treated by the President with greater kindness and distinction than

was the young kinsman who had been, and still was, a rebel to the Southern Cause.

It was vastly easier for the Doctor to reestablish friendly relations with the young lawyer. Simonson was very sick, and the Doctor had satisfied himself that he had not persuaded Harold to enter the Union army; moreover, he had shown himself to be a brave, as well as honorable, man; and in the Doctor's sight that was a distinct claim to consideration.

Thus, in a few days, the *entente cordiale* was firmly established, and the Doctor, mellowed and gentled by grief, and no longer goaded to fury by political opponents, soon became an ideally lovable father and friend. Nor was the result of the reconciliation less happy with Harold and Vergie. Their hearts increasingly went out in loving sympathy to their father, and they tenderly and constantly strove to take their mother's place in his lonely life. In this endeavor Vergie was especially successful; and the Doctor's increasing gentleness and affection had their reflex influence on the daughter's disposition.

Christmas at the Brockenborough Mansion was in pleasing contrast with the previous Christmas at The Elms. The President and his family were at their best; there were many presents and much merry-making, and all Richmond gaily, but not without pious exaltation, celebrated the high festival of the Lord's Nativity. For the time there were no war anxieties. Grant was peacefully touring Tennessee and Kentucky without army, and almost without escort; the Eastern army was inactive, and hope was fondly cherished that England and France and Germany—according to Bismarck's desire—soon would intervene in behalf of their beloved Confederacy.

Dr. Culpepper was happier than ever he had expected to be again. He was reconciled to his son, his daughter was

greatly admired, and he himself was treated by everybody with utmost respect.

Christmas evening there were many callers at the Executive Mansion: members of the Confederate Congress, the entire Cabinet, and not a few officers of the army, notably Generals Lee, Stuart, and Beauregard.

President Davis and General Lee were much together, and every one could see that they were very fond of each other.

General Lee combined cheerfulness and gravity, and was in marked contrast with Mr. Benjamin, who was neither grave nor specially cheerful. Not that the great Jew was lacking in dignity or, on the other hand, was morose—but above all other Southern men he was the most open-eyed and far-sighted. He *knew*. He was the first to announce the inevitable outcome; but was so devoted to the "Lost Cause" he refused to remain under the Stars and Stripes, and ever after the war resided abroad—an English Jew enabling him to rise to the rank and dignity of Queen's Counsellor.

General Lee was hopeful; Stuart and Beauregard confident. "I *hope* we shall succeed," was Lee's guarded utterance. "We *shall* succeed, and that shortly," was Stuart's and Beauregard's oft-repeated boast.

Of course, the ladies were very loyal, and very optimistic.

Harold was present. He was sufficiently recovered to enjoy the occasion, and the President would not allow him to seclude himself.

Introducing him to his distinguished guests, the President would say, "This is a beloved kinsman of mine, gone *wrong*; he's paroled to me; he's a major in the rebellious army that's been causing us so much trouble in Tennessee." Being in citizen apparel, it might have been taken for a jest,



had not Harold and the Doctor always promptly confirmed the statement.

Many, on being thus introduced, spoke affectionately of the "old flag," especially General Lee; and Harold, to his surprise, found himself lionized.

General Stuart said, "We've learned to respect your great army, Major Culpepper, and your rank in it does you high honor, sir."

Dr. Culpepper was surprised to find himself proud of the "ornery whelp." Introducing him to General Lee, he said, "I don't know whether you'll be willing to take the hand of my *rascally* son: you see, he's a major in Grant's army, but just now, happily, in our hands." Instantly the great commander, with high-born courtesy, replied, "It's an honor, Dr. Culpepper, to be commanded by General Grant, and I'm delighted to meet your brave son."

At last Dr. Culpepper and Vergie were alone—the young people were dancing, and Harold was conversing with a young officer of his own rank in the Confederate army.

Vergie took her father's arm and they strolled into the library, which was now deserted. With the gallantry of the old school, he seated her, and then himself took a chair beside her.

"Vergie," he began, "pardon your father's curiosity, but what is there between you and Simonson?"

"Why, Papa," taken by surprise, "what's put that in your head? Harold's been talking to you."

"Nobody's been talking to me, Vergie. Haven't I a pair of pretty good eyes of my own?"

"Do you mean, Papa, that I've been indiscreet, or that he's been over-bold; or *what's* put such a notion in your mind?"

"Oh, nothing, Daughter. I guess I was mistaken."

Vergie was disappointed. She had coveted a chance to

talk to her father, and now she was throwing away the best of opportunities. But she felt she must have advice.

"Papa, dear," she began, haltingly, "are you willing to hear a very foolish story—a story that may make you very angry at your little girl?"

"My darling, your father's always willing to listen to his little girl."

"But this is a terrible story, Papa."

"All the greater reason why you should confide it to your father." He was looking at her very earnestly, but his voice was gentle and caressing.

Then, beginning with her first interest in the young lawyer, she narrated everything, omitting nothing, though often her face was suffused with embarrassment, and sometimes her voice was subdued to a whisper: the evening she summoned him to her room; the night she warned him of the peril confronting the recruiting officer, when, believing that he loved her, she had encouraged him to take the liberties of a lover; the meetings at the buckthorn tree; the many meetings of the following summer and autumn—from first to last she told him everything, except the tragic conclusion of the one great passion of her life.

When she was done her father said: "And—next?"

"There is no 'next,' Papa."

"My daughter, there's always a next to such an experience as yours and Simonson's—a great consummation, or a solemn tragedy."

"Then mine, Papa, is a tragedy."

"And the tragedy, Daughter?"

"Marjorie Gildersleeve! He loves Marjorie."

"Virginia, my darling, you're the victim of the green-eyed monster. Marjorie would never come between you and your happiness; besides, Marjorie's to marry Harold."

"I know, Papa, but——" There were proofs she couldn't submit to her father.

"Besides, Daughter, I've some inside information. I don't know that I've the right——"

"Never mind, Papa. I understand. Harold's been telling——"

"No, Daughter. Harold's told me nothing. He's too busy writing to Marjorie—making up for lost time, I reckon."

"And what's the 'inside information,' Papa?"

"I'll tell you, Vergie. You know I'm not accustomed to indulge in such conversation; nor would I but for the fact you've no mother now. My darling, I've often observed Simonson when you've been about—sort of a way we doctors have."

"Well?" Vergie was amused at her father's awkward embarrassment. "Well?"

"Simonson simply can't keep his eyes off of you when you're around; nor has he ears for anybody but you. And——"

"Yes—Papa? Go on."

"May the Lord and old Hippocrates forgive me, for this seems like divulging the secrets of the sick-room and of the confessional; but more than once when I've been alone with him, and he's been asleep, I've heard him call you by name; and——"

"That'll do, Papa! I don't care to hear the rest."

"But, Vergie," the Doctor continued, not wishing to be interrupted, "Simonson said——"

"Please, Papa, let me ask you a question."

"Yes, Vergie; but I don't like to be interrupted that way."

"Papa," now very earnestly, "let me ask you—let's see; I'll put it hypothetically. If a young man like, well, say



Mr. Simonson, were to be very much in love with a girl like—well, say, just for example, *me*; and said young man were to ask said girl to—to marry him, what do *you* think *she* ought to say?"

"It would all depend, my darling, on how much she thought of—*Felix Palfrey!*"

"Why—Papa! What *do* you mean? Whatever put that silly notion in your dear old noggin?" Vergie was laughing.

Not to be diverted: "Vergie, *is* it all off between my little girl and the gallant Frenchman?"

"Yes, Papa—I'll be frank with you. It *is* all off with zee leetl' moo-*sik* an' lang-*widge*—ah, mas-*taire*, and I'm so glad Uncle Jeffey's got him in Paris. Papa, you must know I never could love a poppinjay. Oh, yes, I confess I was taken with him at first—*awfully!* You know how fetching he is—but, the man that wins me for *keeps* must be *straightforward*. O Papa, he disgusted me till I couldn't bear the sight of him."

The conversation lagged, and Vergie sat musing.

Presently: "Papa, your answer."

"Marry him!"

"Simonson? Old Abe Simonson's son? Cracker? Po' white trash? Ex-convict?"

"Daughter, none of that applies to the young lawyer."

"And you'd give your consent and blessing?"

"With all my heart."

Instantly her arms were about his neck. "O Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, you're the dearest old daddy that ever was!" And with that she danced out of the room. Whatever may have been the cause or meaning of her sudden exuberance, it was evident she had forgotten, for the time, a very solemn promise made to one that was dead.

A minute later, flushed with happiness, Vergie bounded

into her brother's room. She knew Harold was there by the light pouring through the transom, and the odor of a well-seasoned pipe that unmistakably was doing its duty like a veteran.

"O Brother, I've come to tell you that maybe, *maybe* I'll do just——"

"What do you mean, Vergie? Are you crazy—that is, crazier than usual?" Harold was very fond of his sister, and marked that now she was unusually beautiful. "I say, Vergie—what do you mean?"

"Oh, I'll maybe, maybe, when you and Marjorie are married, I'll——"

"You mean *Edythe*, don't you?"

Harold must have been quite recovered or he could not have survived the pommeling she proceeded to mercilessly administer.

"No, you naughty, mean brother. I mean *Marjorie*—don't you understand? The fair Marjorie of all your dreams—Mrs. Marjorie Culpepper-to-be, prospective mama, I trust, of many brave Harolds and fair Marjories, who will call me 'Aunt Vergie'—Marjorie Gildersleeve, golden-haired, blue-eyed daughter-in-*love* of Fairfax Culpepper, M. D., commonly known as 'Quoth Horace,' of whom I fear a certain black-eyed, ebon-haired, ah, somebody will be terribly jealous——"

"Vergie, damn it all, shut your mouth. You rave like an idiot. You must have had pumpkinseed for supper, or a dipper of poppyjuice. You're seventy times seven daffy. Don't you know Marjorie and I played quits long ago? And so help me johnny jumpup, I'm going to marry Edythe if I ever get out of this accursed war of Uncle Jeffey's!"

Vergie now saw that her brother was in earnest; and somehow the world was suddenly jarred from its center, though just how, she was too much confused to understand.

"Edythe? Why, to whom do you refer?" she managed to say.

"Why, Edythe, that's all. There only one real Edythe—Edythe Fernleaf, of course."

"Harold! You going to marry the *Widow* Fernleaf? I didn't know you had the *hay* fever."

"Hay fever? What do you mean, Vergie?"

"Oh, nothing, only she's a *grass* widow!" and with that she beat a precipitate retreat.

But in New Richmond it was no secret that the young Lord of The Elms had transferred his allegiance from the Fair Marjorie of The Maples to the Tangle-Cognomened Edythe of the Millinery Emporium. And in New Richmond there were many "ahs," and "ohs," and "ehs," and not a few ejaculations: "Could you believe it?" "Who would have thought it?" "And what's the world coming to, anyway?" And so on, *ad infinitum*.

It certainly was no fault of Edythe's that *Mr.* Fernleaf was permanently located at New Lisbon, or that his mail was sent "In care of the warden." *Mr.* Abijah Fernleaf had made his *adieux* at the bridal altar, precisely *one minute* after the ceremony, with the kindly, though *unsolicited*, assistance of the *sheriff*. And thus, as a sort of climax to his somewhat *bizarre* career, in a single moment and by a single act had twined his sweetheart's maidenhood, though not her vestal state, with *grass*, and, as it were, metamorphosed her from a Titwillow to a grass-widow—Titwillow having been her maiden name.

That she was not bad-looking is more than vouched for by the wood-cut that appeared weekly in the *very* weakly *Cackler*, owned and edited by Voe Bijaw, in connection with the Millinery Emporium advertisement; and that she was not lacking in literary aspiration is proved by the many verses,



published in said *Weakly*, at so much per line, with which she, poetically speaking, *laureated* herself.

She also played the melodeon at the mid-week prayer meeting.

And—if we may anticipate somewhat—Harold Culpepper did not wait for the war to end, but, upon reaching New Richmond, having departed *sub rosa* from old Richmond, immediately prevailed on her to exchange the Fernleaf for the Cul-pepper—so importunate is love, and so all-conquering is Cupid! Aye, despite Edythe's shyness and timidity, to the nuptial bower he led her, "blushing like the morn."

But Vergie, to return from our digression, was profoundly shocked, not merely by her brother's threatened mésalliance, but by the significance of the fact that now there was no barrier between Marjorie and Simonson, and probably had been none from the beginning.

What, then, was the natural, or at least reasonable, inference? Simonson had always been false to her; Marjorie had always been his real sweetheart, while she, Vergie, had been his easy dupe; and she, Vergie, had flung away the inestimable treasures of her love and sacrificed the priceless jewels of her lips, all save maidenly honor, on a cracker, po' white trash, the low-born son of a drunken ex-convict.

She hated him now. Her wrath against Edythe Fernleaf and indignation against her brother seemed to intensify her fury against the man whom twice—she confessed it with shame—she had madly loved.

Her tigress nature was blindly rampant. Christmas, what a mockery! Below she could hear Strauss' music of passion and the dancers—now she loathed it all. Better the music of demons played by satyrs! Granting she could ever come to *feel* again, to respond to an honorable man's passionate entreaty, should such a wooer ever come, what

could she say to his question—question asked, perhaps, with a world of ardent longing upleaping in his eyes—after Simonson, what could she reply to the question: “Hath these lips of thine ever before been kissed, thus and thus? These hands, so shapely, have they ever been pressed, so and so? This form divine has it ever been encircled and fondled by other hands and arms than mine, after this manner, and this, and this?”

Fiercely she hissed the answer: “Yes! yes, often, many times, numberless times, by a base-natured son of a depraved pariah, contemptuously called ‘Old Abe Simonson, the drunkard-convict.’”

“Oh, how I hate him!” in a tempest of rage. “What a luxury hatred has become! How delicious to despise such a hypocrite! Why did I yield to Harold’s entreaty to be ‘nice to the poor devil’? What happy, accurate nomenclature! ‘Poor devil’! Thank heaven, the poor devil doesn’t know all I’ve thought and felt toward him to-day—even to-night I’d determined to bid him *hope!* Now——”

She was in a small upstairs reception room. “I’ll go to my room and lock the door before Papa comes. Were I to meet him now, after our conversation in the library, and what he must have inferred from my actions, I’d have to lie to him—act the hypocrite. Then I’d be as base as that *creature!* Blessed mother, your prayer for me was not in vain! Your Vergie’s vow is yet inviolate, and shall so remain! And yet—how tempted I have been all day! And to-night I even forgot my vow to the dead! What’s there about that—that Simonson that is so appealing? People say it’s his gentleness and honesty—bah! I know he’s as false as Satan, and crueller than a serpent’s fang!”

Going to her room, she had to pass Simonson’s room. As she did so she heard him speak her name. “Vergie”—it was clear and distinct. She passed on. “Hypocrite,

to presume to speak my name. He knows that everybody's downstairs but Harold, and Harold's abed and asleep. He'd have a tête-à-tête, sub rosa, with his *dupe*—hands, arms, lips, ugh! He thinks it would be *so* romantic! I'd scorn \_\_\_\_\_,"

"Vergie—I want——"

Again the voice came clearly and distinctly. There was something in it wistful, plaintive, appealing.

"Maybe it's time to take his medicine. Possibly he's thirsty from fever," relenting somewhat.

"One would hardly treat a dog, a—a *brute* so mean as that—to refuse drink or medicine when suffering."

Before she realized what she was doing she had returned, and entered the sick-room.

Sure enough, he was alone.

"Yes?" she said, with a rising inflection. "'Tis I, Vergie. Something you want?"

There was no response.

She crossed the room to his bedside. A dim light from the transom revealed his face. He was *asleep*. She looked, half-resentfully, into his face: so strong, so pale, so thin, such evidence of *suffering* and *sorrow*! She thought, "Oh, how can *such* a man, such a *man*, be a deceiver?"

"Vergie, I want—want—you!"

There was a world of pathos in his voice. Restlessly he turned his head on the pillow, showing that his troubles had invaded his slumber—his waking thought haunted him, even in the shadowy realm of phantasm. Evidently he was sound asleep.

"Do people lie in their sleep?" She remembered to have read that certain judges have held that the declarations of men in slumber, though not admissible as evidence, are probably *true*. "Oh, if I could only get a word from him in his *sleep*—right from his *heart*!"



What wonder she was excited? Too, she was fearful of discovery. But she wanted to *know*—but how could she question him in his sleep? People do not converse in their sleep. Yet she must find out—he must declare himself.

Leaning noiselessly above him, and imitating Marjorie's voice, which she could do to perfection—once had done it so perfectly even Fred, Marjorie's own brother, had been deceived—she gently said:

"Yes, dear; here's your Marjorie."

She did not have long to wait for her answer, though the instant seemed an eternity.

"No, no—it's Vergie—*Vergie* I—I want. I f-fought for —Verg—I——" His voice trailed off into incoherence, but he had said enough.

*She had her answer.*

Vergie bowed her head and wept. Gently, very gently, she touched his brow, and her touch seemed to soothe him—at least his restless tossing ceased. His breathing, too, grew deeper and more regular.

"Heaven forgive me," she murmured. "It required almost a voice from the dead to set me right. O Sammy, Sammy, for *my* sake, for *your Vergie's* sake, live!"

And stooping low, she brushed his lips with a kiss, though ever so lightly, lest she should wake him, and passed out of the room.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### VERGIE'S ABSOLUTION FROM VOW MADE TO HER MOTHER

NEVER was soul swept by fiercer tempest than that which almost stranded Vergie when her brother informed her that he was no longer affianced to Marjorie Gildersleeve, and had not been for months.

The fury of a mob is so intense because all the long-accumulating wraths occasioned by the countless wrongs of preceding decades and centuries are instantly fused into one, and focused on the single outrage of the moment. The seething fury that razed the Bastile was not kindled by the arrest and incarceration of four forgers and three nondescript derelicts—but in that flash of time all the enormities of four centuries climaxed, and were concentrated and converged on that isolated pin-point of time and circumstance. The single simple act which, ordinarily, would not have attracted a moment's notice, was the solitary flame-flecked match that ignited the deadly magazine of boundless indignation, precipitating the downfall of the Bastile, and the French Revolution, with all its nameless horrors.

So with Vergie. Her present wrath was the result of the concentration and focalization of the sum-total of all the hypocrisies and indignities she suddenly concluded Simonson had inflicted upon her.

Those who think her anger was out of proportion to the provocation, and that a girl so virile and regnant would have better governed herself, however dire her indignation, little

understand the tempestuous blood that is brewed under Southern skies, or the haughty and imperious dispositions that were bred by the baron-regime of the Slavocrat cavaliers—and of all that extraordinary race and epoch Vergie Culpepper was the most potent and exquisite culmination and consummation. As a Culpepper she was the—

“Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire,  
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,  
Was nursed in whirling storms,  
And cradled in the winds.”

Likewise her contrition, and instant surrender of herself, when convinced by his call out of the prison-house of dreams that he was true to her, had always been true, and that in fact *he*, not she, was the one wronged, was in perfect keeping with the Southern temperament.

Accordingly, nothing now could have surpassed Vergie's sweet engagingness—the inevitable opposite swing of the pendulum. This was her first great passion, made great not only by her own and her lover's temperaments and endowments, but also by the many unusual conditions and circumstances entering into their lives at New Richmond—and feminine intuition made her mistress of all the charms and wiles with which a beautiful woman loves to rapture the One Man.

Gladstone declared of one of his colleagues that his distinguishing characteristic was “a passion for philanthropy”; Vergie's distinguishing characteristic might, not inaptly, be said to have been a genius for loving, and calling forth all that was best and noblest in the one beloved.

And now there was nothing to hinder. The next morning the young lawyer was decidedly better. “A touch of love had almost made him well”; though the secret of her



midnight visit to his room Vergie secretly kept for future revelation.

In the great world without the dogs of war were sleeping; within there was naught but tranquil hope.

Vergie and the young lawyer felt that they had wronged each other woefully—and the fact that each must keep the sordid, wretched secret from the other intensified their contrition, and desire to make amends, each to the other.

With Simonson there was yet another cause for ardency: Comrade Harold's happiness. He *must* forget Marjorie; not only because his passion for her had caused him to wrong Vergie, but now because the honor and happiness of three—Vergie, Harold, and himself—were at stake. He must forget Marjorie, *his* one great passion, to escape misery for Vergie and himself, and to leave the way open for Comrade Harold to marry Marjorie, with whom he supposed him still to be in love—and his only escape lay in loving Vergie to the distraction of all other thoughts and desires.

Nor was this difficult as long as he was in Vergie's presence. Her wit and beauty, charm of dress and manner, thousand witching coquetries, and occasional tidal waves of passion and emotion, when all the rich, warm splendors of her nature were lavished upon him, inspired him, for the time, to vow to her a love commensurate with the demands of her imperious nature; and a constancy unfailing "till the stars are old, and the sun is cold, and the leaves of the Judgment-Book unfold."

At the same time, welling up in Vergie's mind and heart, was the sweet, glad thought: "Marjorie's free, yet he prefers me; therefore I must reward him with myself, and every sweet charm I possess."

"Even though Marjorie were free,—but Marjorie belongs to Harold, and I belong to Vergie," was the young lawyer's

rallying cry when, in Vergie's absence, her vital lure lost somewhat of its potency, and the vision of a fair face in New Richmond, wreathed with golden hair, and illumined by a pair of wonderful blue eyes, would come before him—a vision he always banished as soon as possible.

Vergie had but one secret to trouble her: her vow to her mother.

As a rule, however, women are opportunists—they rarely cross bridges before they come to them: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil [or good] thereof," is their working philosophy. Nevertheless, women, when under the domination of passion or emotion, sometimes "rush in where angels fear to tread"—and by their usual success, and immunity from harm, seemingly prove that angels, if not exactly cowards, are exceedingly timid, and very unlike their sisters here below.

And it was so sweet to love and be loved; just to drift, and ask Fate no questions; just to trust that Love would find a way; just to bask in heavenly sunshine, and not to fret or pester Providence; just to sail on and on forever, or cast anchor in any port—unheeding, uncaring, not even inquiring where or when the voyage would end. And thus they *did* drift for many weeks. But even the longest and most idyllic voyage must end, in port, or at the bottom of the sea.

For several days Vergie had seen that the crisis was coming when she would have to say "Yes" to Simonson's pleading for a formal engagement, or—"No."

But for her vow to her mother, she told herself, her answer must of necessity be an instant and joyful—"Yes!"

Not that she had forgotten her lover's humble origin, but—"none of that applies to Simonson," had been her haughty and aristocratic father's edict, and with her father's word usually was all-decisive. Nor had she forgotten that

before the raucous, ribald mob he had openly disowned her. But it is so easy for a woman in love to forgive—and besides, though he had *said* "Marjorie," she was now convinced that he had *meant* "Vergie."

Thus now that her heart and reason—and, possibly, just a bit of sweet sophistry—were buttressed and bastioned by her father's good opinion, and her brother's enthusiastic advocacy, she felt her answer must be in accord with her lover's desire. But always, when this decision was reached, the vow and curse which in her wrath against him, at the time she had voluntarily pronounced upon herself if she ever violated it, would rise and confront her.

Still, how could she give him up? See him claimed by another, perhaps by Marjorie, now that she was free? See *his* children by another.

No, no! She could not have it so. He belonged to her. Another should not have him. Should—*not*! She would have him—she *would*! Then her vow to her mother would rise before her, and the curse pronounced by her own lips on herself if she ever married him.

Thus she was often almost driven to madness between the two diametrically opposed conclusions: "I *must* have him!" "I *can't* have him!" It was the old problem in physics brought into the arena of metaphysics: "If an irresistible force encounters an immovable body, what will be the result?"

Her torment was augmented by the distress of her lover, who had taken alarm, noting her preoccupation and apparent coldness and reserve, and was pressing his suit with all the ardor and wistfulness that are born of dread and fear, and that are so delicious to the woman that knows the happiness she is about to bestow, but terrible to the conscientious woman that is undecided as to what her answer will be.

At last she worried herself into a headache, with the solu-



tion of her difficulty no nearer than it was at first. She must have counsel—of that she was convinced. In her surrender to necessity there was an element of pathos, for with her strong nature and resolute spirit, she was accustomed to fighting her battles alone. But now she confessed, with a pathetic quiver of her lips, that she was hopelessly confused.

But to whom could she appeal? A woman's first thought, when in trouble, is of the church, and it was so with Vergie. Yes; she would see Bishop Johns, and at once made ready to go to the Episcopal residence. At the last moment, however, she changed her mind. The church, she felt, would not understand her case; besides, churchmen school themselves to repression, self-crucifixion, rigid adherence to fixed rules and formulas, regardless of pain or personal loss; hence are lacking in warm and generous sympathy. In this she may have been mistaken, probably was; nevertheless she acted on it, and abandoned her visit.

She next thought of Mrs. Davis: why not open her heart to the President's kind and experienced wife? But the suggestion was soon dismissed. Women are rarely frankly confidential with one another; their appetency and genius for loving seem to incapacitate them for the more prosaic and less highly romantic offices of friendship. Damon and Pythias have no female counterparts. Vergie was afraid Mrs. Davis would be harsh. Women are prone to apotheosize the men who demonize their sisters. This is a hard world for woman; women make it so.

To whom, then, could she go for advice. Naturally, one would say, "Why not to her father?" For the reason that young people instinctively refrain from confiding their amours to their parents. Courtship is fraught with peril, especially to the girl; and though parents have braved them, they are unwilling that their children should take the

same risks. However, since the death of Vergie's mother she and her father had become increasingly confidential, drawn to each other by a common loneliness and sorrow; and she now resolved to tell her father the precise situation, and abide by his advice.

Her father was not in when she called at the Spotswood House. No one knew where he had gone or when he would return. "Would Miss Culpepper leave a message?" She was deeply distressed, but declined to leave any word; possibly she would return later. No, she would wait if some one would show her to his room—no, she would leave word for him to come to see her immediately upon his return; and this, finally, she did.

An hour later her father rushed into her room. Her message had greatly alarmed him and he had come post-haste. "Thank God, Daughter!" when assured that she was well, and that Harold was all right, and that the young lawyer was "as good as new," and that no ill-word had come from New Richmond, "after all, there's nothing wrong."

"But there is something wrong, Papa," now taking refuge in tears, "and it's serious, too."

Then she told her father of her last interview with her mother; of her mother's inherent dislike of the young lawyer; of her mother's premonition that he would become a suitor for her hand in marriage; and, finally, of the vow her mother had exacted of her never to marry him, and of the curse she had voluntarily pronounced upon herself if, for any cause, she should fail to live up to her vow.

"Well—and now?" The Doctor had risen and was looking out on Clay Street, deeply moved by his daughter's agitation, and newly awakened memories of his beloved Charlotte.

"Papa, you know. You must have guessed it Christmas night, and had your guess confirmed daily since then. All

that Mama feared has come to pass. The man she so hated has become a suitor for my hand, and has won my heart. He is now waiting for my answer. Oh, Papa, is my vow inviolable? Must I put away the one great happiness of my life? Even you, yourself, like the young lawyer; repeatedly you have said so. Harold likes him, too; says he's the only man he ever met he'd be willing for me to marry; and—and *I love him!* Tell me, Papa, is there no way out of my trouble?"

"Vergie, my darling," taking both her hands and kissing them, like the gallant gentleman of the old school he was, "what you tell me distresses me exceedingly. I should have been more mindful of you, especially since you are a motherless little girl; but my own sorrow, I fear, has made me selfish and neglectful. Then Harold——"

"But, *Papa!*" Her case was too urgent, and her distress was too poignant, for circumlocution. "Papa, dear, answer me! Must I say 'Yes,' or——" She could not bring herself to utter the alternative.

"Then, Vergie, if you must have my answer at once, I grieve to say it must be 'No'; you cannot marry Simonson."

"Oh, you cruel papa!" She broke down and sobbed convulsively. Dr. Culpepper was too wise to attempt to say more till her anguish had somewhat abated. Presently, however, he said:

"Daughter, you haven't told me why your precious mother exacted of you such an unusual vow. Won't you tell me now?"

"It was be-because he is l-low-born, Papa. But *you* said that doesn't count with him."

"I know I did, Daughter, but your mother's judgment always was better than mine. I spoke on the impulse of the moment, for I do like Simonson; but your mother doubtless had ample reasons for the course she pursued. Mothers



see farther into the future than fathers, especially when a daughter's happiness is at stake.

"But, Papa, is *prejudice* a good and sufficient *reason*?"

"Daughter, no woman was ever freer from prejudice than your sainted mother."

"What *was* it, then, if it wasn't prejudice?"

"I can only surmise, my darling. Shall I tell you some of the considerations that probably actuated your mother?"

"Oh, yes, Papa, for my heart is breaking."

"Well—and now I begin to see clearly—there was the matter of social position. It is true that in marrying Simonson you wouldn't marry the whole Simonson family; nevertheless, willy-nilly, you would be incorporated in the Simonson family, and would become one of them.

"But you, my daughter, are an aristocrat from toe-tip to tip-top, and, despite yourself, would come to hate your husband's people; and inevitably they would hate you. And, Daughter dear, in these sad times, when bourgeoisie vandals are seeking to level all social conditions, actually proposing that whites and black should intermarry, many have lost sight of the fact that a girl would better commit *suicide* than marry a man below the *class* to which she belongs—as you would be doing were you to marry Abe Simonson's son.

"Doubtless your mother, too, had thought of the children the good God might bless you with; but children born of the union you contemplate would incorporate the Simonsons in *our* family."

Vergie now remembered that her mother had used the identical words her father now used. However, her heart was too much enlisted to meekly surrender.

"But, Papa, do not *all* families have humble beginnings? Think how often men and women of lowliest birth have risen to great renown in art and letters, warfare and statescraft; how men like Napoleon have battled upward from

hovel to monarch's throne and sceptre; how deepest poverty sometimes ascends to greatest wealth! Who knows but Samuel Simonson is to become the founder of a great and glorious house? And we Culpeppers, Papa—are we not descended from a wild *Indian*? And do you not boast that you are descended from Pocahontas? And in jest have you not often called me Princess Zohanozoheton? And haven't *we* turned out pretty well?"

Vergie was greatly excited. Her eyes flashed, and a brilliant glow was in her cheeks. She felt she must not fail—she had so much at stake.

"Vergie, precious little lambkin," very gravely, "your father will not argue with you. I'll answer your question to the best of my ability, out of a loving heart—that's all I can do. You will then act according to your own best judgment; but whatever course you may pursue, you will always have your father's love and blessing."

"O Papa, dearest Papa! You're the dearest old papa that ever lived." Again she had thrown her arms about her father's neck.

"And your answer is——?"

"There is *no* absolution from your vow; the only one able to absolve you from it, alas! is *dead*."

Quietly he withdrew. He couldn't bear to witness his daughter's misery—and yet he felt he had said and done no more than was his duty.

As he descended the stairs he was more than ever convinced that he had spoken wisely; and prayed that his daughter might heed his words, remember her mother's warning admonition, and at last come to a decision that would be honorable alike to both the living and the dead.

By the time he had reached the Spotswood House he was able to congratulate himself on his excellent work, and to

predict that very soon everything would be correctly and happily adjusted.

But the imperious descendant of King Razometah and Princess Zohanozoheton now was thoroughly aroused.

She revered her mother's memory, but—her mother had wronged her.

She did not blame her mother, but—a vow so exacted, under such terrible pressure, could *not* possibly be binding.

Her frightful oath could not be held against her, because at the time she had made it *she was not a free moral agent*.

She would see the President. He was grave; he was conscientious; he was profoundly religious; he was a great scholar and widely read; he was skilled in casuistry; often he had had to make momentous decisions on which hung life and death, and he had promptly and bravely made them, regardless of the wrath or praise of men. Yes; she would see the President immediately.

Fortunately, he was at leisure. Seated in his library, he was reading a well-worn copy of Thucydides. A volume of Plutarch was at his elbow. She plunged at once into her story and, Culpepper-like, told everything.

Of her mother she spoke reverently; nevertheless, she declared her mind frankly—innocently, yet grievously, she had wronged her daughter.

Of her oath-confirmed vow she declared herself already absolved, because, at the time she had pledged and forsworn herself, she was not a free moral agent.

Of her affair with the young lawyer she declared everything, without omission of jot or tittle: she herself had taken the initiative because she loved him; *she* had taught *him* to love *her*; after her vow to her mother she had tried to hate him, but had not succeeded; now, boundlessly happy in each other's love, a vow stood in their way and forbade further progress; that vow she was resolved to disregard.



"If I'm in error," she concluded, "if I've acted unmaidenly, if I've thought, said, or done aught for which I should repent, tell me so frankly—with your *reasons*. Do not praise or flatter me—the way men have of evading truth in the presence of a woman.

"‘Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice; then must thou speak  
Of me that loved not wisely, but too well.’”

It sounds theatrical, melodramatic; but so might Vergie's Indian ancestress have spoken in a like distress, had she had the education and culture of her no less inflammable and determined descendant.

Very gently the President dealt with Charlotte Culpepper's daughter. It was a case that appealed to him—as casuist, cavalier, churchman, theologian, politician.

He declared his lifelong love for her mother, but recognized her *fallibility*. "Even the best of mothers, the most loving and devoted, sometimes err in judgment," was one of his remarks.

As casuist, he observed that because *one* conscience is insufficient for the guidance of *two* persons, each person has a complete, separate, private, personal, individual conscience of *his own*—and to his own private, personal, individual conscience, and to that *alone*, must each person yield absolute and unquestioning obedience.

As cavalier he reminded her that the class to which her father belonged was passing, and from that standpoint a *good* man of the Simonson stamp was, other things being equal, to be preferred.

As politician, he pointed out the ebb-tide of the old Virginia families—Washingtons, Jeffersons, Madisons, Monroes—and the flood-tide of honest and aspiring plebeians, the most notable example of whom being the President yon-

der, referring to Mr. Lincoln, a man of nebulous and uncertain ancestry, yet exalted to the highest pinnacle of human ambition—all of which was in her lover's favor.

As theologian, he had nothing to say, since theology deals with broad fundamental principles, and not with intricate specific cases.

Finally, as churchman—but he wouldn't tire her with arguments *pro* and *con*, or the verdicts of synods and councils, which were often contradictory, always *exparte*, occasionally cruel, sometimes absurd.

"But *my* case, Mr. President," Vergie exclaimed.

The President had spoken so gently, with such grace and rhythm of diction and inflection, and with such fullness of knowledge and experience, for many minutes she had forgotten the urgency of her petition, and the gravity of the decision she had implored him to render.

"We've already reached your case, daughter, and disposed of it," with a grave smile and gracious inclination of the head.

"Why—when, Mr. President?" Vergie was suddenly confused. Had she stupidly fallen asleep? And at the most vital moment, too, and lost the all-important dictum? "When, Mr. President?" she repeated.

"When I spoke, daughter, of the supreme allegiance we owe to our own private, personal, individual conscience. At all hazards, Vergie, you must be loyal—not to *my* conscience, or Fairfax's conscience, or your dear dead mother's conscience, but—to your *own* conscience.

"However," he continued, "I have read in some old antiquated volume of a scheme, devised by pious saints, for the strengthening and comforting of troubled consciences such as yours—satisfied, indeed, as to the righteousness of the conscience-verdict, yet agitated and distressed owing to conditions, circumstances, associations, or ancestral teach-

ings and beliefs—what might be called the momentum of discarded ideas. Shall I give it to you?”

“Oh, yes, Mr. President. I’m certain that I’m right, yet I *am* greatly disturbed and distressed.”

“Very well. It is this: When vows of an extraordinary character have been made, under pressure such as practically robbed the vower of volition, and oaths have been sworn under like pressure, or under misapprehension or misinformation, or when laboring under stress of passion, or judgment-destroying excitement, and the witness thereto, or the recipient thereof, subsequently dies, or permanently disappears in such a manner as to warrant the presumption that the party exacting said oath or vow, or witnessing thereto, is dead—then the nearest of kin, being cognizant of all the facts in the case, and being persuaded in their own minds, approved by *their* consciences, that the plea of the appellant for release from said vow or oath, or both, should, and of right, ought to be granted—*then* said kinsmen, being of sound mind and good report, *may* decree the dissolution of said vow, oath, or obligation, of whatsoever report or character, so that thereafter it shall be no longer binding.”

Vergie was puzzled, though she had listened with deep attention.

“Please, Uncle Jeffey, may I state it as I understand it?”

“Certainly, Daughter.”

“The supreme, all-decisive verdict, in the case now under consideration, must be rendered by my own, private, personal, individual conscience. Am I right?”

The President bowed affirmatively.

“Anything yourself, or Papa, or Bishop Johns, or any other person may say, to the contrary notwithstanding?”

Again the President bowed, adding, “Upon the assumption that you are of sound mind, and have reached the age of accountability.”



"Then *my* decision, all-determinative, *may* be ratified and confirmed—*though not necessarily*—by two of my kinsmen, thereby giving my conscience-verdict, which can neither be appealed from or repealed, a sort of visible validity, of men judicial recognition and sanction?"

"You have clearly stated the essential facts."

"Then, my conscience having rendered its verdict, and that verdict having been approved by two kinsmen, I have the constitutional, supreme-judicial, before-men right, before God and man to consider, and declare, myself absolved from the oath-confirmed vow I made to my mother, of precious memory, and from peril of the disapproval or disfavor of God."

Once more the President bowed.

"And will *you* be one of my judicial kinsmen to confirm and declare my absolution?"

To Vergie's surprise but great joy the President took her hand, and devoutly said: "Yes; with all my heart."

"And—will you persuade my dearest, dear papa, our darling Quoth Horace, to be my other absolving kinsman? You have so much influence with Papa; and if he should have objections you would know how to meet them."

The President hesitated but a moment. "Yes, Vergie, for *Charlotte's* sake I will see your father. As to whether you should marry Simonson I have nothing to say—here again you must decide for yourself. I will say, however, that since he's been my *prisoner* I have studied him closely, and I admire him greatly—all except his abominable political heresies," with a humorously wry face. "And should you conclude to honor him with your hand in marriage you may count on my blessing, and the good wishes of all my household—and this includes the servants, whose hearts he has completely won."

"Glory be!" Vergie exclaimed. But a moment later she asked herself, "Why did I say *that*?"

It had been her father's oft-repeated expression the afternoon and evening he had celebrated the Confederate victory at Fredericksburg, and it brought to her mind the young lawyer's prostrate form on the ground, and his turning from her, in what had seemed to be his dying moment, to Marjorie Gildersleeve.

"Oh, *why* did I think of that speech?"

The President immediately sent his carriage to the Spotswood House to fetch the Doctor.

Dr. Culpepper, still glowing with pleasurable excitement over his successful settlement of his daughter's perplexities, was at once ushered into the President's presence only to learn that *his* settlement utterly refused to *remain* settled; and that his success had been a huge *non*-success.

At first the Doctor was very angry, but the President knew how to mollify and persuade him; and, in the end, he was won over.

An hour later—it was now midnight—with Vergie reverently kneeling before them, and with their hands none the less reverently placed upon her head, they pronounced her absolution, uttering in unison the following words:

"We, your kinsmen, being conversant with all the facts in this case, do absolve you, Virginia Lee, from the vow made to your sainted mother, now at rest in heaven; also from the oath which you, at the same time, did take—believing that this act of our's will meet with the approval and blessing of Almighty God. Amen."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### HAROLD CULPEPPER ESCAPES—MARRIES AND WRITES A LETTER

SUCH a tempest of emotion as that which had tossed Vergie several days must necessarily sooner or later subside. Hence when Vergie had felt herself verily absolved from her oath-confirmed vow, and her engagement to the young lawyer had been ratified by her father and her brother, and received with favor by the President and his household, including the servants—for all the world loves a lover—there had followed the natural subsidence to a state more nearly normal.

Depression usually follows exaltation, especially when the nerves have long been taut with an absorbing desire and an almost insuperable obstacle has periled its realization; and such would have been the case with Vergie but for her great vitality and exuberant health. As it was there was only a passing from distress to repose—like that of the imperturbable general who, after a mighty battle, surveys the field, counts the cost, and estimates the value of the victory.

But if Vergie was not depressed she was very much sobered, and rendered keenly introspective and retrospective. Her virile mind, furiously driven many days, refused to come to a dead standstill at once but proceeded, of its own volition, to weigh and estimate things with greater exactness than was her custom.

In most respects, she concluded, she had nothing to regret. She was sorry she had rebelled against her father's decision,



but that had been unavoidable; besides her father had confessed that his judgment had been swerved by his love for his precious Charlotte. Too, there was in her heart a gentle sorrow on account of her rebellion against her mother's edict; but here again, she argued, her mother had been in error in exacting the vow, and permitting, without protest, the almost sacrilegious oath—the President himself had said as much. On these points, matters of conscience, she concluded she was perfectly satisfied.

But the young lawyer, now that he had become her husband-elect, came in for a closer inspection; as women usually first buy goods and take them home before giving them a thorough examination.

Of her love for him, and that he would be to her an ideal husband, she entertained not a single doubt; and that they would be supremely happy together was as certain as that two plus two equal four, not knowing that in lovers' affairs nothing can be taken for granted, and that even the exact sciences sometimes run amuck.

Yes, she loved her fiancé with all her heart; that much was certain. She was absolved from her distressing oath-confirmed vow to her mother; that was a blessed consummation. She was to be the young lawyer's wife; ah, happy realization of all her dreams!

Still, try as she would, she could not repress a lingering regret that her lover did not belong to the Davis-Lee-Culpepper class. True, there was no visible line of separation or demarcation; nevertheless she knew there was such a line, and now she could *feel* it. It was not his fault he was a Simonson, any more than it was her merit she was a Culpepper, but the thought was there and she couldn't wholly dismiss it.

Then some of the epithets to which she had given free rein during their estrangement now returned to vex her. In those

days when, humiliated by his seeming rejection of her and turning to Marjorie, and goaded on by her mother's hatred of him, she had found a sort of savage relief in sneeringly calling him "that cracker," "scion-upstart of the po' white trash class," "glorious son of Simonson the Drunkard-Convict, low-born and contemptible," and similar fiercely derogatory cognomens; and now whenever she would try to heroize and idealize him, after a maiden's fancy and fashion, this horrid brood of epithets would rush in and take possession of her mind.

Nor could she wholly dismiss the thought of his people. True, the young lawyer had little fellowship with them, and but rarely referred to them; still, they were his people and, once his wife, they would be hers also. But how could she ever darken their threshold, or permit them to darken hers, or even hear their names mentioned without a feeling of revulsion?

*Children.* Here her perplexity defied solution. Of course she would have children; she was sane and normal and therefore wanted children. But Simonson children! To become the mother of Abe Simonson's grandchildren—horrors! Of course the old reprobate would insist on coming to see them; and how could she deny him the privilege? And more than likely they'd want to visit their grandparents—why not?

All this was bad enough; but one day in the President's library she came across Velotti's *Reversion to Type*. The revelations of this book were to her maddening. There she learned that Nature, in freakish mood, sometimes decrees that children shall be replicas, facially, morally, temperamentally—not of their parents but of some ancestor, grandfather or grandmother, or a blend of both; and she was certain this would be the case with her children. But how could she endure such a fate? Mother of a brood of Abe-Simonson children!

There was yet another disturbing thought. After all had her lover always been true to her? True this thought was not insistent, nor did it grapple her; in fact, it touched her only occasionally, and then only as a phantom might touch the lightest sleeper without waking him; nevertheless it was disturbing and had in it an element of pain.

However, once in her lover's presence all doubts and fears were forgotten; as her presence also banished from him his equally secret, and no less disturbing, doubts and fears regarding himself. They were both young, good to look upon, intensely vital; what wonder they found exquisite nepenthe in chaste and honorable loverly intimacies, and all in a sacred privacy the propriety of which none could question?

Thus apparently everything was tranquil and everybody was happy. Harold was more than well, to use his own exuberant expression; Simonson, in civilian dress, and bearing a pass signed by the President, at last was able to take long rides, usually accompanied by Vergie, far into the country; Dr. Culpepper had become a great social favorite among the *elite* of the Confederate Capital; the President was enjoying a respite from his tormenting neuralgia; Confederate generals and congressmen had lost some of their former acerbity of speech and manner; Washington was still unable to find a commander able to cope with the yet invincible Lee; and with the brilliant pre-summer weather that always comes to Richmond in February the Executive Mansion was the center of a constant round of gay *fêtes*. They were on the threshold of great and awful defeats—The Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, Atlanta, Winchester, Mobile Bay—but their eyes were holden.

A new man had arrived—U. S. GRANT.

As at Brussels they danced the hours away, happily ignorant of the pending Waterloo-tragedy, so at Richmond there was "no rest till morn when Youth and Pleasure meet, to



chase the glowing hours with flying feet" throughout the memorable January and February, '64. Alas! that so many hearts, beating high with hope and ardor and thrilled by woman's thralling and entrancing wit and beauty, were soon to no more know the sweets of love; and lips, all-eloquent with the poesy and necromancy of passion, should already—though they knew it not—be parted to wail *miserere* swansongs punctuated with death-gasps, with grim death the final period.

Amid the whirl of all this feverish military and epauletted gaiety Major Culpepper vanished. Had he dematerialized in their presence his departure would have been less mysterious; they would have known the time and manner of his going. As it was they had not a single clue.

As to reasons, there were none; at least they knew of none. He had won the good graces of all the members of Mr. Davis' household; only the delicacy of a host had prevented the President from securing his exchange; he was known to be *persona gratissima* to one of Richmond's richest and handsomest belles in whom, apparently, he was interested, and to whom Vergie had prayed he might speedily lose his heart, and thus end a certain other romance that was to her in every way exceedingly revolting. Nevertheless he was gone, leaving not a single trace, hint, or clue—all of which was thoroughly Culpepperesque.

Doubtless he had returned to New Richmond, for which the way was open. He had a pass signed by President Davis; he was personally known to General Lee, and by sight to many officers who had seen him at the Executive Mansion; he was well supplied with Federal money; it was only a few miles to the Federal outpost, and but ninety-eight miles to the Federal capital. Of course he had returned to New Richmond.

They also thought there was a woman in the case. Dr.

Culpepper was of this opinion because there was no other assignable lure; but he also added that Harold had never been much of a lady's man, or fond of society, else he would have remained in Richmond. That he had been captured or kidnaped or killed none entertained a thought. He was too strong and masterful, too much like Vergie, for that; besides he was universally popular. No, he had returned to New Richmond.

It would be difficult to determine which of the two, Vergie or her fiancé, was the more agitated by this event. Had Vergie broken confidence with her brother and proclaimed *the* woman Simonson would have had only a secondary concern, but as it was he was immediately conscious of a secret fear that seriously threatened his happiness; for he was certain Harold had returned to marry Marjorie, and to herald the pending union between his sister and Samuel Simonson.

Of course this should have made no difference considering that he was engaged to Virginia Lee, and that they were soon to be married. But it did make a difference, painful to relate. The only mitigation that can be urged, and it must be confessed it is by no means satisfactory, is that many otherwise estimable people have been in a like predicament; and some, pitiable to relate, have even gone to the altar with a secret hope that a certain person might not be present to witness the ceremony, and to listen to the responses.

Happily for the young lawyer Vergie herself was too much distressed to mark her fiancé's preoccupation. But Vergie's main thought was not of Marjorie but of a certain Edythe Fernleaf, commonly yclept, by those who were piqued by her successful enterprise and independent bearing, "the Widow Fernleaf," though she was a "widow" in name only.

That Harold had returned to New Richmond for the purpose of marrying the grass-widow she had not the slightest doubt. But how could she ever be reconciled to such a

misalliance? The *Widow Fernleaf*, of the new *Millinery Emporium*, her sister-in-law and Dr. Fairfax Culpepper's daughter-in-law, and their ex-son-in-law and brother-in-law in the *penitentiary*! How could Harold marry into such a family?

Suddenly the thought came to her that she was doing precisely the same thing; how could she reproach her brother for marrying into the *Fernleaf* family when she herself was about to marry into the *Simonson* family? She felt she could not breathe, that every drop of her haughty, honorable, cavalier blood was turning to molten fire and searing every atom of her being. With shame and rage was mingled remorse, and reproaches against herself which she felt could not possibly be bitterer than she deserved.

From a window she saw her father coming down Twelfth Street, head erect, shoulders thrown back, mass of snow-white hair falling almost to his collar, ruddy open countenance; leisurely swinging his cane, with the easy grace of a born gentleman; greeting a bevy of ladies with the high-bred air of a Southern cavalier and, with a dignity that would have done honor to the courtly commander of the Prætorian Guard, answering the salute of a passing Confederate officer.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "what are Harold and I thinking of? Disgracing the House of the Culpeppers! Harold espousing the grass-relict of Abijah Fernleaf, *convict*, and I—I the son of an *ex-convict*! And Mama—*dead*! O Mama, forgive your daughter. You did your best, dear precious Mama, to save me, but I was headstrong, rebellious, *wicked*! And poor Papa, so gentle, so gracious and indulgent, so pitiful and merciful—always! And I rode him down a month ago, trampled on him, appealed from him, my own father, to Uncle Jeffrey, and got his decision reversed; and all the while Papa was trying to save me! Oh, how I have dishonored



him, and put him to shame; and now—*Harold!* Broken-hearted over Mama's death, his precious Charlotte as he ever calls her, and desolate now *we* complete the tragedy, we his own children, and bring his gray head in shame and sorrow to the grave."

In the midst of her harrowing reflections Norah, a servant, entered with a letter. Vergie took it and tossed it aside. How could she ever read or *care* again? Ten more days of such torture and she would be qualified for admission to the hospital for the insane—ten days since Harold's disappearance. Absent-mindedly she again took up the letter and idly glanced at the superscription. She started. Her hand trembled. It was from Harold. There was a momentary thrill of joy followed by a shiver of dreadful apprehension, for the postmark was *New Richmond*.

Tremblingly she broke the seal, the Culpepper seal; evidently it had been written from The Elms. The letter itself was shockingly harum-scarum, ebullient, slapdash, while the chirography was decidedly *nonchalant*. Harold's horsemanship was always better than his penmanship.

"THE ELMS, NEW RICHMOND, ILL.

February 14, 1864.

Dearest Sister—I'm literally swimming in bliss; no, *floating*—and there's neither shore, nor bottom, nor sky-line.

Observe the date, February 14. That's *mating day*, and that's what we've done.

Edythe didn't want to yet—wanted to have it postponed till the folks returned; but I was wise, see? Afraid the *tigress* might get on a rampage and spoil the performance, and our dear Quoth Horace paralyze the preacher with one of his *snezorics* from the Sabine Bard—that straight?

So I jis took her, *snilly-billy*, round to the Me-*tho*-dist circus-rider and ast him if he could enter us for a double act, life contract. Said he guessed he could—and *bygiminybits*, he did. Mighty short and sweet, too—no laces, or ruffles,

or frills, or fringes, or flounces, or furbelows, or millinery-ceremony for me. *Edythe* was all the millinery *I* wanted.

Went to old Frothy's first (Rector Frothingay) but he wasn't at home, and, gollygee, I was some glad. Why, he'd been chewin' the dearlybelovedbrethrenitbehoovethus exhortation yet. What we wanted was, not injunction, but conjunction!

But, holy jim crow, I was frightened to a *fuz*. Your Uncle Razometah trembled in me to his toes, and my molars chattered till I could hardly say 'yes'—said it something like this, 'y-y-yes.'

So bad that the preacher got excited and said to my *Edythe*, 'D-d-does your m-m-man stut-tut-tut-stutter?'

Didn't know before that the preacher's tongue was hem-stitched and tied in a sailor-knot.

And *Edythe*, poor girl, was that embarrassed she went to stutlerin', too, and said, 'D-d-don't k-k-know. Ast him.'

Then all three of us—two galoots and an *angel*—got to stutlerin' to beat Alex Smart's brass band. Oh, Jerusha put the kittle on, what a time we had!

Come to find out none of us had a 'stotteren tunge,' as Fritz Otelmeyer would say—all happened kaze I was that *skeered*.

Oh, yes, una sorella mia, quoth zee leet' mas-taire, zee—ah, moo-zik an' lang-widge' teach-aire, *Edythe* and I are at The Elms.

*Edythe* didn't want to come but I jis fotched her. We'll occupy *your* room, the one you know done in pink and ivory, though *Edythe* won't touch one of your things—she's that *pertik'ler*.

Present my regrets to Uncle Jeffey. He's a good sort but so al-fired toplofty I was always afraid of his Royal Nibs. But ask him to fix up my exchange somehow—tell Uncle Sammy up at Wash that I'm sick and therefore *cannot* come—only fix it up so I'll not get shot for desertin'; for I'd hate that like sam hill esquire.

Break the news in your own *gentle* way to our dear old Quoth Horace, and if he gets on a high horse remind him that one of our folks married an *Injun*, and that it's just the old Razometah himself that's turned loose in me. Do this

for your brother, won't you, my dear Princess Zohanozoheton?

Please let Edythe and me know in advance the date of your return—will it be to spend your *honeymoon*?—that we may put The Elms in apple-pie order.

Your own deliriously, snipsnortingly, uxoriously happy brother—Harold.

P.S.—Saw old Abe this afternoon. Drunk as usual, and en route to the *Bastile*. Ast about his Sammy—and—Miss Vergie. Wanted to know how long till he could call you 'darter.' You know he's awfully *deef*, so I had to shriek so's to be heard a mile: 'RIGHT AWAY!' Said he was goin' to bring his 'Ol' Worman' and pay you a long visit soon as you two '*turtle doves*' got home, as he believed in *kinfolks* 'bein' soshy-a-bul. And I told him to come right along, and not to forget his dog and fiddle. Edythe was *redheaded* at me, and said I ought to be ashamed of myself—that you and my grand old father would be so ashamed of them.

And sister, dear, SO WOULD I!

H."

To say that Vergie was furious, or livid with rage, or in a towering passion, or any other thing permissible or expressible in any known tongue, would be only a shadow or hint of her state of mind when she had finished reading her brother's letter.

Especially was the postscript like the slash of a fang in a serpent's tail. She was no longer hot—she was cold; she was no longer nervous—she was like frozen steel; she was not tempestuous, but in a dead calm such as is always most portentous when such temperaments are driven to desperation.

Now her intellect moved with the precision of a geometrical straight line. *Such* a letter from a *Culpepper*, Fairfax and Charlotte Culpepper's son, regarding the holiest *sacrament*, save one, of the church; concerning a relation that is typical of the union there is between Christ and His



Church; holding up to ridicule an occasion that the blessed Saviour at Cana had deemed worthy of His presence and first miracle—smiling the pulseless water into beaded and winsome wine; with vulgar phrase satirizing and covering with opprobrium the family hearthstone and the bridal couch; irreverent toward God's anointed minister, their sorrowful father, their most illustrious kinsman, the Government he professed to love and serve, the sanctities and sacred relations of life, his sister, his only sister, who had fought many battles for him, kept secret her knowledge of his many escapades that he might escape sore punishment—toward *her* such disrespect, loutishness, vulgar and cutting innuendoes!

"How low!"—there was no warmth or tenderness in her voice—"how groveling! how brutish! Thus beast of any breed might rave and revel when mated with the opposite sex, were it capable of speech.

"How I loathe everything that is sensual, unholy! Yet—is there in *me* a nature that might be deflected? Is that the meaning of——?"

The color rose in her face, but she refused to translate the thought, to her a new one, into articulate speech.

"And is that all there is of love?" slowly, pitifully, she said. "Are love and lust synonymous? Is our mission but to mate—and sate—and—propagate——?"

Again her face grew darkly red, and all the light seemed to go out of her eyes, leaving her a pathetic incarnation of despair—her face a death masque.

"If love means no more than that, or marriage—but there was my *mother*! So sweet, so spiritual, so heavenly-minded!"

Presently her mind returned to Harold's letter. She glanced at the postscript. The iron entered her soul, as he doubtless had intended it should.

"Oh, the heartlessness of it! Is passion—cruel, flagitious, murderous, fiendish? Harold never before flung coarse insult and taunt in my face, and he now does it to—justify himself."

Her mind was working slowly, unerringly—"And would I justify my—*marriage* to—*Simonson*——?"

Another long pause. "Simonson—Oh, yes. Harold says: 'Saw old Abe—drunk—Bastile—ol' worman—*darter*—*visit*—long time—sociable—come right along—*dog and fiddle*—*Edythe* ashamed—so would I——'"

Again Norah entered with another letter. "*This* letter, Miss Culpepper, is for Mr. Simonson, but he's out—what shall I do with it? It's pretty bulky, you see, and heavy—maybe it's awfully important. If you'll take it and hand it to him when you see him, I'll be relieved of responsibility, and can do another errand right quick."

Wishing to accommodate the maid, Vergie said: "All right, Norah; I'll hand it to Mr. Simonson," and took the letter. She held it, however, but a moment, and then returned it.

"Give this letter to Mr. Simonson yourself, Norah," very deliberately, "and say, 'Mr. Simonson, here's a letter from your *other* sweetheart,' and be as innocent as a tomtit. Above all, don't permit him to even suspect that I have any knowledge whatever of this letter."

"Oi ondershtand, shwate one," replied the daughter of the Emerald Isle, dropping into her native brogue. "Shure, an' Oi've a felly iv me own," and passed on.

"And, Norah, dear," calling the maid back, "please tell President and Mrs. Davis that I've gone out to stay all night with a friend, and shall not return till to-morrow."

"Shure, me darlint, Oi'll delivir yiz missige to th' Priz'-din', an' to ony *ithers* phwat may make enquiries."

But Vergie was gone and did not hear the closing remark, or observe the mischievous smile that accompanied it.

The *letter* bore the New Richmond postmark, and the chirography was *Marjorie Gildersleeve's*.



## CHAPTER XXX

### VERGIE LEAVES RICHMOND—SIMONSON REMANDED TO LIBBY PRISON

IF, in defiance of all the canons of the story-teller's art, we rush to the rescue of the reputations of two of our characters, it is because sheer justice demands it.

Despite a certain letter, written by Mr. Harold Culpepper to his sister, Mr. Culpepper was not, to use his own phrase, "a bad sort." For proof we need only cite the fact that he was a Kentuckian.

It is true he was an excellent judge of fine horses, a *connoisseur* of mints and juleps, was never averse to a quiet game of poker, and, when his honor or veracity was questioned, was "nasty with his dukes and barking baby," to use another choice expression common to the vernacular of the Egyptians; but—well, he was a Kentucky gentleman, "*a bluegrass thoroughbred*," and no higher credential could be desired, not even at the Court of Saint James, sir!

And, despite certain remarks made by Mr. Culpepper's sister—made, let us remember, when that estimable young lady was laboring under great excitement and a most grievous misapprehension, Mr. Culpepper was *not* irreverent toward church, clergy, religion, marriage, or, least of all, his revered father, or his adored and adorable sister. He was simply the fortunate victim, as was his sister, of an exuberant vitality, for the expression of which he could find no adequate lexicographical vehicle and yet which must have vent; hence like a river that abandons, with cheerful

and magnificent *sang-froid*, all conventional banks and dykes whenever there chances to be an excessive downrush of water from the mountains, and blithely meanders whither it will, so Harold in extreme emergencies sometimes laid hold, it must be confessed somewhat debonairly, on whatever miscellaneous, unclassical, or even unvoucher-for figure of speech, or unetymological word or conglomeration of words that might be in easy reach at the moment of his dire necessity—as a drowning man, for example, clutches at the first straw, not stopping a moment, borne on by the torrential current, to consider its genera, species, former condition of servitude, or any other extraneous or unrelated matter, really not caring a *rye-straw*.

And it is only fair to say, in behalf of Mrs. Harold Culpepper, *nee* Edythe Fernleaf, that despite a marital tragedy that would have wrecked most women, she had bravely faced the world, kept her life unsullied, her name untarnished, and, by industry and enterprise, so prospered as to render it unnecessary—indeed impossible—to offer charity or pity to “thuh durned spunkey little chick,” to use Nic Tutwiler’s favorite expression; that, though a grass-widow, she was only twenty, *petite*, had a rosebud mouth, a wealth of fetching ringlets, a pair of saucy blue eyes that would have vanquished the sternest judge or most obstinate jury, and “moh biz an’ git up thun yuh c’d shek uh stick ut,” to quote again from Mr. Tutwiler; that Mr. Harold Culpepper did *all* the courting, and that there were no *clandestine* meetings; that she was a Free Methodist, but was not averse to the Episcopilians of the *Methodist* variety; that she had really and truly loved Harold from the first time she had seen him; that she saved the Culpepper family from extinction by presenting to her happy husband six lusty male Culpeppers, the first in less than a year, and added luster to the name by giving one son to the church, *via* Evanston and Boston; another to the

army, *via* West Point, and a third to the Federal judiciary, thus reanchoring the Culpepper family to the Federal Union, *via* Harvard and Columbia; and, incidentally, turned her husband from the cultivation of wild oats to pursuits more in keeping with the high repute of the distinguished family, and his ever-increasing importance as an influential citizen—for which her husband and the Culpeppers were supremely indebted to her tireless industry, business acumen, and never-failing tact and diplomacy; and, finally, won Dr. Culpepper's "dog my cats, Edythe, you're the finest daughter-in-love in the world," to which *Mrs.* Vergie—gave instant acquiescence.

When Vergie left the Executive Mansion she had no definite plan or objective point. She only knew she was not in a fit frame of mind to meet Simonson (she hated scenes), and that she could never marry him; and, had she been interrogated, she would have doubtless declared she was determined *never* to marry, which would have been the Culpepper truth, which knew no "variableness or shadow or turning."

It was almost dark and, being unattended, she decided to go to the Spotswood House, where she knew she would find her father, more than likely at dinner, as he usually dined early. The cool evening air was bracing and she needed the exercise, so, as the distance was not great, she decided to walk; besides, she could always think better when walking in the open air.

She reflected that Harold's letter—for, of course, her father must be apprised of at least its substance—would easily and naturally lead up to what she wished to say regarding herself, her fiancé, and the course she now intended to pursue.

She expected a stormy session and in this she was not



disappointed. Dr. Culpepper was in every respect a gentleman of the highest integrity, and one that almost deified veracity. She knew that as he had opposed her engagement to the young lawyer, and had writhed under his recession from his decision, under pressure from the President, that she could *not* be absolved from her solemn vow to her mother, and the confirming oath voluntarily taken, he now would protest, with even greater vehemence, against her recession from her engagement; feeling, as he would, that her veracity, her very honor, was doubly at stake.

It all turned out precisely as she had anticipated. Her refusal to join her father at dinner, and request that he secure a room for her for the night, were to him sufficient evidence that something extraordinary had occurred or was pending; but when she told him what Harold had done, and what she herself proposed to do, tears were insufficient to express his grief and shame; and even profanity, to which he was only occasionally addicted, but which he had sometimes found a very present help in time of trouble, entirely failed him.

In the end, however, Vergie had her way, as is usually the case with daughters, and with Vergie in particular—though it was almost midnight before the doughty Doctor capitulated, and even then not without a groan that touched Vergie to tears.

“And now, Papa, dearest old Papa,” giving him a strong hug and a series of very saccharine kisses, the compelling quality of which she had often tested, “let’s be oriental—‘fold our tents like the Arabs, and as quietly steal away.’ We’ve only two hours to make the train to Nashville, *via* Danville and Knoxville; and from there to New Richmond, *via* Louisville, Cleopas, and Enochsburg, will be easy. Oh, yes, Papa, I know what you’re going to say. But the trains now are running through to Nashville, for I heard the Presi-

dent say so to-day. No, Papa, passports aren't necessary. Your dear old gray head's all the passport you need, and as for myself—well, I'll look to my wits. Besides, we're acquainted with everyone at this end of the line; and the rest of the way their ignorance of us will be our best asset."

Accordingly a servant was deputed to the Executive Mansion with two notes: one to the maid in charge of Vergie's room, instructing her to immediately pack Miss Culpepper's trunks and forward them to the Richmond and Danville depot; the other to the President, informing him that Harold had returned home, had taken unto himself a wife, and that it was imperative that they should go to him immediately, closing with the usual thanks, compliments, *et cetera*—and at 2 a. m. the Doctor and Vergie bade farewell, not regretfully, to the Confederate capital.

But the President didn't receive Dr. Culpepper's note for the simple reason that he was not at the Executive Mansion. It was receipted for, however, by the President's private secretary, duly read, and, as it contained information concerning an *escaped* Federal prisoner, was immediately turned over to War Secretary Seaton.

Mr. Davis long had been distressed by Gen. J. E. Johnston's contumacy. It must be confessed there was no love lost between the anxious President and his great field marshal; only their mutual love for their country enabled them to work together at all; and never had there been a moment when they hadn't heartily wished themselves rid of each other. Still, not even the Rhett's and Yancey's and Vane's and Brown's and, finally, Pollard, could rally a sufficient following to depose the President—the ardent desire of Gen. J. E. Johnston—and the President couldn't find a better general to take Johnston's place.

But now the trend of events was gravely ominous. Nash-

ville, Rossville, Murfreesboro, Knoxville, and Chattanooga were in the hands of the Federal Government; the animosities of Northern generals had subsided, and there was substantial unity of feeling and counsel among all the commanding officers, Fremont, Hunter, and McClellan having been eliminated from the army; Lincoln was steadily gaining in popular favor both at home and abroad; the Vandaligham fiasco had been turned by the President, with unusual shrewdness, to the discomfiture of Southern sympathizers in the North; and Northern valor and patriotism had made the ranks of Grant and Sherman stronger than ever.

Now there was something new in the air. A bill had been introduced in the Federal Congress, by Elihu B. Washburne, for the revival of the rank of Lieutenant-General, which, up to this time, had been given to but two men—Washington and Scott—and to the latter only by *brevet*. There was no secret as to the man who was to be invested with this high rank and prerogative: U. S. GRANT.

President Davis did not like U. S. Grant, and knew that U. S. Grant did not like him; but Davis knew—had known long before it was found out at Washington—that of all the Federal commanders, Grant was the one supremely to be feared by the South.

Davis and Grant had soldiered together in Mexico. Then it had been *Colonel* Davis and *Lieutenant* Grant. There, too, Davis had met Sherman, McClellan, Meade, Kearney, Hardee, Kilpatrick, Logan; but none had impressed him as had the silent, taciturn, dogged Lieutenant Grant.

Davis had never forgotten an evening they had met at a pulqueria in the City of Mexico, after attending a reception and ball at the palace of Fernando y Roxas, and two or three questions Grant had asked him. Even then he had thought there was something ominous in them, and in the *man*.



Grant's subsequent career, especially since the outbreak of the war, had confirmed the President's opinion formed in Mexico: that Grant would fight, hard, persistently, relentlessly, regardless of cost or suffering, unto victory, or *extinction* of one or the other army, or both of them.

And now he must meet this merciless man again, this time as a combatant. He was coming with a group of field marshals, an *ensemble* never equaled, and now in perfect harmony; with an army the greatest, in point of numbers, hard training, experience, and equipment, ever organized and put in the field, and now flushed with victory; backed by a triumphant government, one of the richest and mightiest in the world; and to meet all this array of wealth and numbers and genius, fired by an unspeakable hatred of both himself and his government, he had:

1. A Vice-President whom he had not seen or heard from in eighteen months, but whom he knew to be constantly conspiring against him; and whom any other ruler would have seized and hanged or beheaded.

2. A group of governors disloyal to the core, two of whom deserved political, if not physical, decapitation.

3. A Congress that, instead of helping him all they could and manfully standing by him, was gravely debating his deposition—whom Cromwell would have dispersed, and Mirabeau would have sent to the Bastille or guillotine, probably the latter.

4. A dozen corps commanders and division commanders whose insubordination and disobedience at Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Missionary Ridge, and elsewhere would have justified their court-martialing and execution.

5. Thousands of rich planters and cotton-growers that insolently refused to fight, send substitutes, pay taxes, or in any way recognize his authority; and who ~~were~~ infinitely

more treasonous, obstreperous, and insulting to Mr. Davis than Vallengham ever was toward Mr. Lincoln.

6. A country wasted and bleeding from the ravages of war, and a people indeed rebellious—but now in rebellion against their own president and their own government.

What Lincoln had succeeded in doing, Davis must do or give up the struggle: harmonize his generals, win great victories, rally the people about himself and his government.

Preëminently the great malcontent and mischief-maker was Gen. J. E. Johnston, who was also at war with General Hood—after Lee, Longstreet, and A. S. Johnston, the Confederacy's best and bravest fighter.

If he could pacify Gen. J. E. Johnston, the effect would be salutary on General Beauregard, another malcontent; and with Generals Hood and J. E. Johnston working together amicably, maybe the other generals would fall in line, and thus, by degrees, a solid and harmonious South might be brought to confront and do battle royal with a solid and harmonious North.

With this thought in mind, and prayer in his heart, the harassed President had left Richmond on the afternoon that Vergie had received the letter from her brother, and another letter, addressed in the well-known chirography of Marjorie Gildersleeve, to the young lawyer—had left quietly to allay suspicion, escape a garrulous and meddlesome press, keep the Washington government in the dark regarding his movements, insure his personal safety, and to safeguard his office from threatened usurpation.

Thus his mission was to see Hood and Johnston, seek Johnston's reconciliation to himself, Johnston's and Hood's reconciliation to each other, and pray for the abandonment of Johnston's Fabian policy, and an immediate campaign of hard fighting against the Federal armies of the Cumberland and the Tennessee.

For this reason Mr. Davis did not receive Dr. Culpepper's note regarding the whereabouts of Major Harold Culpepper, paroled to President Davis over the protest of War Secretary Seaton, and now escaped to New Richmond, Illinois—but the irate War Secretary *did* receive it.

While all these currents and counter-currents were rushing on, with ever-increasing velocity and fury, a certain Captain Simonson, likewise paroled to the President, and likewise over the protest of the same Mr. Seaton, War Secretary, was leisurely riding one of the President's horses far out into the country, enjoying the invigorating air, and rapturously dreaming of his fiancée. Late in the evening he had returned to the Executive Mansion. Inquiring for Miss Culpepper, the maid had informed him that she had gone out to remain over night with a friend. "No; Miss Culpepper left no note or verbal message," the maid had replied.

Very naturally, Simonson was nonplused, and just a little piqued. This had never happened before—what could it mean? Evidently nothing. Some sudden emergency had arisen—perhaps one of her many friends had suddenly been taken ill, or had died, or been killed, and she had gone on the spur of the moment to render assistance and consolation. "It would be just like her, the blessed little darling," he had mentally added.

He would try to find her; it would be hard to live without her so long. But on reflection he concluded that to hunt for her in Richmond would be like hunting for the traditional needle in a haystack.

Then the thought came that he would go to the Spotswood House and spend the evening with Dr. Culpepper, between whom and himself a decided liking had sprung up. More than likely he would have done this had not the maid that moment intercepted him.



"Mishtur-r Simonson," ever so sweetly, "here's a littir-r fr'm yiz ither shwateheart," handing the letter which, only a few hours earlier, had given Vergie such mortal offense.

Simonson laughingly took the letter and was about to make a fitting answer to the maid's pert speech, when, glancing at the face of the envelope, he observed that his name and address had been written by the hand of Marjorie Gildersleeve—and that it was a *long* letter.

Abruptly leaving the maid, in a manner which gave great offense to her ladyship, he went at once to his room and flung the letter down on the table. He was sorry Marjorie had written; he was trying to forget her. He wanted to be left free to devote himself wholly and solely to Vergie. Once he had treated Vergie shabbily; put her to open shame before the world, he told himself, and he wanted to make amends by lavishing upon her a lifetime's devotion. And Vergie deserved it—she was so good, so true, so loyal, so utterly immovable in her fidelity to him. "Not heaven or earth or hell," he affirmed, could ever move her to give him up, or waver in her allegiance to him. "Through poverty or wealth, through sickness or health, come good or evil report, we'll cling to each other."

"Nevertheless, Marjorie—ah, yes, Marjorie——"

He concluded he'd open the letter, anyway. Common courtesy required as much; besides, it would be sweet to read what she had written.

He tore the envelope half open. "Maybe I'd better not read it, after all," he said to himself. "But no; Marjorie's not the sort to ask embarrassing questions, or to put herself in one's way. Of course I'll read it, and——"

He drew the letter from the envelope—it was *not* from Marjorie.

The entire enclosure was from the Judge, and related

wholly to business. Marjorie had only addressed the envelope for her father.

The whole complexion of things now was changed. At first he had been sorry that Marjorie *had* written to him, and now he was disappointed because she had *not* written to him. Simonson certainly was very hard to please.

He finally concluded, after looking over the various documents, that he was a very much abused person. Vergie had unceremoniously left him, to be gone several hours—in fact, all night—and Marjorie, though addressing the envelope, had not deigned to write him even the briefest message. It had not occurred to him that he had never written to Marjorie, and that when he had taken his final leave of her he had done so in a very formal manner.

It must be confessed that Simonson was in a decided funk. Had he been wiser in the ways of women, he would have regarded the mere addressing of the envelope by the fair Marjorie, though she had enclosed no message, as an act extremely significant, more so by far than a merely formal letter of friendship—it was a mute sign that he was not forgotten and, at the same time, a tender appeal for his remembrance of her.

Little could Marjorie have foreseen how fateful the mere tracing with the pen of Simonson's name across the large buff envelope, such as lawyers use for the transmission of deeds, mortgages, and other bulky documents, was destined to be for several persons, herself and "Samuel Simonson, Esq.," included.

Simonson retired early, consoling himself with thoughts of the delicious amends that would be made on the morrow, when Vergie had returned, beheld his woeful countenance, been brought to realize how cruel she had been, and then had—the rest may be safely left to the reader's imagination.

It could not have been later than 2 a. m.—in fact, it was

just that hour, for Simonson remembered hearing the whistle of the departing train on which the Culpeppers were passengers—when he was unceremoniously, but not rudely, awakened and told to arise and put on his clothes.

At first he thought himself the victim of a prank, rude jest, roistering joke; but a second look at the stern faces of his nocturnal callers convinced him that the invitation was a command, and that it was not to be debated, but obeyed.

“Do you mean to say, gentlemen, that I am under arrest—in short, am a prisoner?”

“That is our meaning, sir.”

“And by whose authority am I submitted to this indignity? Not the President’s, surely.”

“By the authority of John L. Seaton, Secretary of War.”

“Then I appeal to my host, President Davis. Will you not permit me to communicate with him? Why, gentlemen, this is a gross breach of all the gentle and gracious laws of hospitality—to thus come and bear away a guest; and that, too, from the President’s own residence.”

Simonson was rather disposed to felicitate himself on the fetchingness of his speech, and more than half expected the men to abjectly implore his pardon and obsequiously withdraw. Nothing of the kind happened, however; but the spokesman, lacking nothing in courtesy, proceeded to enlighten the “guest.”

“We recognize your embarrassment, sir, and are not unwilling to explain the facts in the case, as we understand them; though, in the meantime, you can be dressing.

“In the first place, the President is not in Richmond, nor will he be in Richmond for several days; hence it would be impossible for you to appeal to him.

“Furthermore, only technically are you a guest—a sort of guest by courtesy; as a matter of fact—for your sake we regret to say it—you are a prisoner of war.



"Again: this is indeed the President's residence, but *legally*, at the request of the President, and by virtue of a special arrangement with War Secretary Seaton, made at the time yourself and Major Culpepper were brought here, this is also an official *prison*, and on the records of the Department is known as 'Brockenborough Prison.'

"I regret to say, still further, all this was done over Seaton's vehement protest—a protest Seaton has made a matter of record.

"Again: Secretary Seaton made the concession for Major Culpepper only because he was the President's *kinsman*, and your name nowhere appears in the record. Thus, so far as our record shows, you are *now* in Libby, and have been there constantly since you were turned over to us after the battle of Missionary Ridge; and, as you have not been exchanged, unmistakably you should now be in Libby Prison."

The young lawyer listened to the recital of undeniable facts with increasing wonder. Finally he said:

"But why, *why* this extraordinary haste at this hour, in the President's absence?"

"Because the President *is* absent, and because you've no claim on the President, and because your comrade has dishonored the undeserved privileges he has enjoyed and has gone to——"

"Major Culpepper—have you heard from him? Do you know——"

"As though you hadn't known all the time."

"Before God, I declare to you, as a gentleman, I've had no knowledge of his whereabouts. You've word—where is he?"

"In New Richmond, happily *married*! Come, Captain, are you ready?"

"Yes, gentlemen—only—would you mind if I left a mes-

sage for Miss Culpepper and her father, that they may know where to find me?"

"No use, Captain; they wouldn't get it."

"Why—why not?"

"They're no longer here. They've returned to New Richmond, Illinois."

## CHAPTER XXXI

MARJORIE. VIRGINIA LEE. ELAINE

SIMONSON should not have been surprised at his arrest, for he must have known that his absence from prison was wholly without law or precedent.

Furthermore he must have known, or should have known, that his unrestricted liberty, at the Executive Mansion and on the streets of Richmond, was a constant source of irritation to those who loved the South, against which he had fought, and who hated the North, of whose army and government he was both representative and defender.

Ordinary perspicacity also should have enabled him to see that his happy, debonair countenance and manner of life, however innocent, were multiplying the President's enemies and intensifying the bitterness of his powerful foes.

He should have, and ordinarily would have, regarded Major Culpepper's unceremonious departure as a signal for instant and decisive action on his part—either to voluntarily return to Libby Prison or, on the theory that "all's fair in love and war," to make a dash for liberty as Harold had done; for, strictly speaking, he was not the President's guest but Harold's. The President, who knew nothing of his antecedents, social status, or merits or demerits, had invited him to Brockenborough Mansion wholly on his nephew's account. The President's sole interest in Simonson had been that of courtesy—to Harold's friend, Vergie's fiancé, and the Doctor's prospective son-in-law.

All these considerations should have been emphasized to



Simonson's mind by the storm of fury aroused in Richmond by the escape from Libby Prison, during the night of February 9-10, of 109 Northern prisoners, of whom fifty-nine reached the Federal lines in safety, forty-eight were recaptured, and two were drowned—an escape peculiarly exasperating to the Confederate Government, and Libby Prison authorities in particular, because of Richmond's wild ovation, that very hour in progress, to Gen. John Morgan, who had just made his sensational escape from the Federal prison at Columbus, Ohio, and their proud boast, as voiced by Gen. John H. Winder, that "no Billy Yank can ever get out of our hands."

Yet, through all this storm of personal hatred of his generous host, and venomed fury against his government and compatriots, Simonson had come and gone with all the gay and happy freedom of a well-known and honored member of the President's household.

But while the situation was wholly anomalous and, strictly speaking, both foolish and without warrant of law, it was by no means inexplicable; nor, from the Southerner's standpoint, was it other than praiseworthy save when some great interest was at stake, as in the present instance; and, indeed, from the Northerner's viewpoint, while the situation was hugely quixotic, and richly spiced with humor—for the Roundhead never can understand the Cavalier—it was in no sense censurable.

"Love is blind," "All the world loves a lover," "The sacred obligation of a host," "Noblesse oblige"—are the accurate and all-sufficient explanation of the altogether embarrassing "Brockenborough Mansion episode," as it came to be called.

Seaton's invasion of the President's residence at that hour to arrest Captain Simonson was wholly unnecessary, and was prompted solely by a desire to show his authority,

and to humiliate the President. He could have seized the Federal Captain far from the Executive Mansion, and at almost any hour of the day; but the President had overruled him and he hated him.

Moreover, more than likely the War-Secretary knew his tenure of office would be brief and whatever resentment he could show, and vengeance wreak, must be done quickly. And how could he more humiliate the President, or effectually appeal for the favor of his powerful and malignant enemies, than by invading his private residence—*legally* Brockenborough Prison—and in the dead of night dragging out as it were, and indeed was so reported, “by the hair of the head a notorious damned Yankee soldier and nigger-worshiper whom for months the President has been shielding and actually pampering like a prince!”

Thus Simonson reëntered Libby not only with the odium of being a Yankee but also a victim of the venom of the President’s enemies; and, that there might be lacking no element of bitterness, now spurned and treated with silent obloquy by his fiancée.

Also—Gen. John H. Winder. To those familiar with the inner workings of the Confederate prisons during the last and most terrible year of the War no comment is necessary.

General Winder was Warden-General of all the Southern military prisons—Libby, Belle Isle, Andersonville, Pemberton, Macon, Charleston, Charlotte, Wilmington—and, while not cruel, was disposed to magnify his office. He was not a fierce malcontent like Stephens, Hunter, Rives, Atkins, or certain governors like Vance and Brown, or such generals as Beauregard and J. E. Johnston, or distinguished civilians of the Rhett, Pryor, Yancey stamp; still he was decidedly of the opinion that the President was entirely too lenient toward Northern prisoners. It was but natural,

therefore, that he should conclude that it was his duty to add to the rigors and severities of prison life—rigors and severities that shocked the whole world, all of which were concealed from the kindly President, or artfully pooh-poohed and explained away.

But General Winder took a special pride in, and felt a personal responsibility for, Libby Prison because it was at Richmond, his personal and official residence.

Hence when he had learned that 109 prisoners had escaped from Libby Prison, he had hastened from Macon, Georgia, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." Major Turney, the Commandant, was given a very unhappy session, all sentinels on duty that night were thrown into Castle Thunder, and the remaining 1,091 Federal prisoners were made to quake with terror.

Of course, the President was to blame—everybody said so. "If the President were not so squeamish and chicken-hearted," was a common remark, "all our troubles would soon be over." And Toombs, chancing to be in Richmond at the time, made the significant remark: "If I were President I'd give the damned Yankees yonder in Libby a taste of hell-fire and brimstone;" and everyone knew that "good old Bobby Toombs" was a man of strictest veracity.

And Simonson had to bear the added venom and malignancy that were inspired by the sneering declaration that he was "the President's darling pet and *protégé*."

But for the pity and compassion of Major Turney, it would be difficult to surmise how far they would have carried their persecution of the hapless young man; possibly he would have been made away with entirely. His life was made a constant torture; and, not unfrequently, bullets whizzed in decidedly uncomfortable close proximity to his head. All these, by that rare good Providence that seems to watch over all lovers, he happily escaped. Others, however,



were not so fortunate. Lieutenant Hammond's ear was nicely perforated, and the captain of an Ohio regiment was killed by a bullet fired from Carey Street.

All this was bad enough; but one day when he was roughly seized in the Upper Chickamauga Room, hustled to the Lower Chickamauga Room, and more roughly still hurled down to the basement dining room, then dragged back through the carpenter shop and finally locked in one of the cells usually reserved for runaway negroes and Federal prisoners under sentence of death, his fears and misery reached the nether-depth—for to his mind his removal to a "death cage" could mean nothing less than that he was soon to be put to death.

Happily, however, he was mistaken. What had seemed a cruelty was, in reality, a mercy; and his apparent summons to death was but a gracious act of clemency to secure his safety—and back of it all stood the merciful President, his former host, with the knightly and chivalrous Commandant as the President's altogether-willing aide.

When the President, on his return from his conference with Generals Hood and Johnston, was apprised of all that had occurred at the Executive Mansion during his absence, he was naturally in a towering rage. Every instinct in him of loyal chivalry and knightly hospitality had been outraged by his War-Secretary's infamous act, and but for the expostulations of Mrs. Davis and Mr. Benjamin he would have immediately dismissed Seaton and ordered Simonson's return, in pomp and state, to the Executive Mansion: such were his imperious temper and generous nature. Being brought to see the unwisdom of such a *contretemps* he did the next best thing: sent for the Commandant and instructed him to shield Captain Simonson, and to make his imprisonment as merciful as possible.

The Commandant, to the President's delight, yielded a

glad and instant acquiescence. This, however, was to be expected. Between the President and Major Turney there had long existed a bond not unlike that which has immortalized Jonathan and David, and Damon and Pythias. They had soldiered together in two previous wars: the Black Hawk and the Mexican. Major Turney had been Mr. Davis' confidant when he, Davis, was a suitor for the hand of General Taylor's beautiful daughter—that General Taylor who subsequently became the hero of the Mexican War, and twelfth president of the United States; and when a calamity that beggared speech had befallen Comrade Turney, Comrade Davis had hastened to comfort him, and render him every service possible. For more than a third of a century they had been as brothers, and when the way had opened for Major Turney to become Commandant of Libby Prison they were mutually delighted.

But, apart from the President's request, Major Turney liked the unfortunate prisoner. He had often recalled the day of his arrival at Libby Prison the previous November; his then haggard face, emaciated body, and raging fever; the quiet for him he had for weeks enforced in the Lower Gettysburg Room, just over the Hospital; Harold Culpepper's recognition of him as a fellow-townsmen, and his admittance to the prison of Miss Culpepper the day the sentinel had refused to admit her; the removal of the two young men to Brockenborough Mansion; his recovery and appearance on the streets, usually in company with Miss Culpepper; the rumors of his approaching marriage to the famous beauty—and then for both himself and the prisoner the deluge: the escape of 109 Federal prisoners; the anger of General Winder; the arrest and imprisonment of the sentinels; his own rebuke and threatened deposal; the fury of Seaton against both himself and the President; the dramatic re-arrest and re-incarceration of the prisoner; the

order to proceed to yet greater severities in the treatment of Federal prisoners; and finally an intimation from the War-Secretary that "since Captain Simonson must be, and doubtless is, qualified to furnish maps, drawings, and specifications of all the forts and defenses in and about Richmond, with much other information that would be invaluable to the Government at Washington, and thus possessed would be disastrous to the Confederate Government; and that, furthermore, since prisoners *might* escape, indeed *were* escaping, *if* Captain Simonson should be so *unfortunate* as to meet with death, *accidentally*, of course, which would be most shocking, indeed *deplorable*, then, etc., etc., et cetera."

It was at this last intimation that Major Turney, with a great show of vindictiveness, had Simonson removed to the remotest, and most rarely-visited, part of the prison, and placed in solitary confinement.

By this arrangement Simonson was not only shielded from harsh treatment and constant peril but was established where he could receive the personal attention of the Commandant.

Major Turney, the Commandant, was kind-hearted, of more than ordinary culture and refinement, of one of the oldest and most aristocratic and influential Southern families, and naturally felt a loathing for the cruel treatment that Secretary Seaton had decreed for all Federal prisoners, especially those at Libby Prison; and, consequently, spent most of the time in his office which was immediately below "Milroy's Room," near the cages, and opened on South-side Canal Street.

Thus it often happened that when the Commandant was supposed to be in his office, or in the city conferring with other officials, he was at the "Simonson Cage," supplying the Federal Captain with food from his own table, or engaged in conversation with him.



In this way Simonson was made measurably comfortable; usually was served, secretly of course, from the Commandant's own table; and, but for the Commandant's inability to provide the "cage" with light, bedding, and furniture, his position, aside from being a "solitary," might have been vastly worse.

As the friendship between the Commandant and Simonson ripened into intimacy the Commandant's family began to hear glowing accounts of a wonderful "caged prisoner;" so many indeed that the Commandant's wife, Mrs. Heloise Turney, and his daughter, Miss Elaine Veronica, became warmly interested.

Curiosity is a wonderful whetstone, especially when applied to a young girl's vivacious imagination; and, in the course of time, Miss Elaine insisted on being permitted to have a glimpse of "the terrible wild man Papa has caged."

To this the Commandant objected, for no particular reason; and the mother for all the reasons that any mother, under like circumstances, would urge; and with the result that the reader has already surmised: the said Elaine had her own way; and, having seen him once, she persisted in seeing him many times, indeed *very* many times.

Elaine's oft-repeated visits were rendered all the safer by the removal in midsummer of the Prison carpenter shop from the center room of the basement—one end of which served as a dining room—to the west basement room where the carpenters would have more light and ventilation from a double exposure, south and west—the young lawyer's cage being in the remote rear of the now-vacated center room of the basement, a region of Plutonian darkness.

It had been proposed at first to move the carpenter shop to the east basement room, known as "Rat Hell Cellar;" but the idea was abandoned because the plumbing there was bad, the faucets leaked and kept the floor damp, and

sometimes the room was flooded by the back-waters of James River. It was from "Rat Hell Cellar" Colonel Rose and his 108 comrades made their escape.

Thus with the carpenters removed to the west cellar, the east cellar abandoned to rats and miscellaneous filth, and the vast cavernous center cellar, at the rear of which was Simonson's cage, occupied only at meal-time, it became safe to permit Simonson to receive his callers outside his cell.

In case anyone should be seen approaching, it would require but a moment for the prisoner to lock himself in his cell, and his callers to appear in the role of baiters and tormentors.

And here for many months Simonson "held court," and gave "drawing-rooms," but only two persons ever "appeared"—the commandant and his daughter, Elaine Veronica.

By this arrangement of the commandant, sanctioned by the President, Simonson was enabled to keep informed regarding the progress of the war, and other great world movements: the Russell-Gladstone backdown from recognizing the Government of the Confederate States of America; Napoleon's maneuvering to establish a monarchy in Mexico; Bismarck's tireless intriguing with Italy, Austria, and France, ever scheming for the downfall of France, ever striving for commercial and territorial advantage, ever promoting the Unification Idea among the Germanic peoples; the great Victor Emanuel's steady progress, battling against a political Papacy, and for the establishing of a non-Papal, non-ecclesiastical, all-inclusive, United Kingdom of Italy; and Russia's open advocacy of the Lincoln government, despite Victoria's, Napoleon's, Bismarck's, and Gladstone's unconcealed and vaunted hostility toward the North; Halleck's downfall, and the call of Grant to the supreme command of the Federal army; the immediate "spat" between

Grant and Stanton, and the quiet, but thoroughly effective, "spanking" administered by Grant to the able and invaluable, but ever-blustering, Bismarckian War Secretary; the buoyant expectations at Washington when Grant, with his army of 122,146 soldiers, marched out against Lee, with his army of 61,953 soldiers; of the bloody struggle in the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania, with 37,335 Federal soldiers killed, and nearly as many Confederates—all in the merry month of May, '64; the awful carnage at Cold Harbor, and Butler's fearful fiasco at Bermuda Hundred; Gen. Jubal Early's descent on Washington, and Sheridan's descent upon the valiant, but outgeneraled, Jubal in the Shenandoah Valley; of J. E. Johnston and J. B. Hood still being at "outs," Davis' inability to reconcile them to each other or himself, Johnston's final deposal, Hood's promotion to the supreme command of the Western army, and his awful defeat before Atlanta by Sherman; Farragut's victory at Mobile, thus closing the last mouth of the famishing Confederacy; "Sheridan's Ride," and his three great victories: Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek—so rapidly was history being made, and destiny determined.

Here, too, while Commandant's and Captain's hearts were knitting together, and, between whiles, a third heart was being strangely thrilled, the story of the political situation was from time to time related: the extreme lateness of the Democratic National Convention at Chicago—August 29, '64; the violent speeches there made against the Lincoln administration, particularly by Belmont and Seymour—one rampant and rough-shod, the other specious, virulent, but polished to the utmost; the "war-failure," "peace-at-any-price" platform adopted, and the brilliant victories of Farragut, Sherman, and Sheridan following so quickly as to put the platform and its sponsors to boundless ridicule; McClellan's and Pendleton's nomination to head the national ticket



—one by 162 votes out of a total of 216, the other by 54½ votes out of a total of 216, but both subsequently made unanimous; Lincoln's and Johnson's nomination by the Republicans, and the fierce and bitter opposition to Mr. Lincoln of Stevens, Greeley, Chase, Henry Winter Davis, and other prominent and powerful Republicans; the thrilling progress of the wonderfully dramatic campaign; Lincoln's reelection, receiving 2,330,552 votes, with 212 electors, to McClellan's 1,835,985 votes, and 21 electors; Chief Justice Taney's death, October 12, '64—information of the greatest interest to Simonson—and President Lincoln's magnanimous bestowal of that great office on Salmon P. Chase.

But all the while Cupid was busy—but now it was a strange Cupid, or else with that increased wisdom said to accrue by age and experience, and menaced in reputation by his constant ill-success in managing Simonson's heart affairs, Cupid now had adopted an entirely new line of strategy. Or possibly Simonson himself had changed—who knows? And if so, what wonder, considering the tremendous vicissitudes through which he had passed since his arrival at New Richmond a certain February day, coming by stage from Enochsburg—and that first evening at Judge Gildersleeve's—ah, yes, and—Marjorie.

And now—Elaine Veronica——

There were no melodramatics on the part of Simonson over Vergie's extraordinary recession from her engagement, and unceremonious departure from the Confederate capital—no wringing of hands, or moans, or lamentations. Not that he was fickle, for he was the farthest removed from being an emotional weather-vane; not that he hadn't loved her, for he had; not that finally he would have done by her as she had done by him, for he would have been loyal to her to the very last—but the lure that had led him on had been her intoxicating vitality, the magnet physical: the glory

of physical beauty and passion, magnetized by thrilling heart-volts electrical, yet always sweetly chaste, pure, honorable, even when most exquisitely all-surrendering and seductive.

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . for one star differeth from another star in glory."

Instead of depression over Vergie's departure, Simonson felt elation, as the wine-bibber and the opium-eater rejoice when the nerve-tingling, rapturing, but unhealthful, drugs are removed from sight, and their spell is broken. Now the air seemed cooler, sweeter, more refreshing and invigorating; his vision clearer, more accurate; his apprehension and judgment keener, saner; he found himself emerging as from a wonderful delirium into the normal. He was himself once more.

To Simonson there was also another cause of gratulation—once more he was on good terms with his conscience.

He had felt that he had sinned against Vergie. Hence her glowing eyes, brooding face, and Fate-like voice, denouncing him that night at Judge Gildersleeve's, had roused him to an unspeakable anguish of self-reproach, so great that he had plunged into the purgatorial fires of war that he might find cleansing, Nepenthe's kiss, and strength to return to her as her true and devoted knight.

And he had been faithful unto *death*; he had stood at Death's door, and would have entered had not Vergie led him back to life.

Now she had openly repudiated, disdainfully rejected, the bond he had faithfully, and at such cost of peril and suffering, executed.

By her own act she had ruthlessly separated herself from him, would none of him. He was free. Conscience said—*Joy!*

"Marjorie—*no!*"

She belonged to Harold. No one had told him. He had no recollection of Edythe Fernleaf. Had he remembered her he would never have thought of associating her with a *Culpepper*. Had he been told that Harold Culpepper, that *any* Culpepper, would wed a tradesman or trades-woman he would have denounced the declaration, and declared it libelous.

Harold—Vergie—Marjorie—yes; they were of the same type, class, order—*only*—Marjorie was *higher*. "—There are also celestial bodies—one star differeth——"

Marjorie was the same—*plus*. She had a form as queenly as Vergie's; a beauty even more radiant because it was of alabaster and pink and turquoise-blue and gold; a love at once as virtuous and passionate, but with an exaltation, sort of heavenliness, always added thereto; a manner and bearing equally lofty, commanding, royal, yet in every movement and gesture uplift, dignity, gentleness, benevolence. All these things she had and was—but she was also: health, and bread, and drink, and wisdom, and healing, and consolation, and inspiration.

Yes; she was *of* the Culpepper class, but—*higher*. Marjorie—Vergie. Both glorious—but

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another—for one star differeth from another star in glory."

Marjorie—the *celestial*; Vergie—the *terrestrial*—Elaine Veronica——

But the young lawyer was a prisoner, outcast and rejected, son of old Abe Simonson, the drunken ex-convict reprobate. In Vergie's conduct toward him at the last it all came back to him. She had seared it into his very soul with a stylet of relentless steel.



“Who am I, to daydream, to build air-castles, to think of such as—Marjorie? I know,” he said, fiercely, as if waking angrily in the lap of some deluring Delilah, “I know I’m nothing, worse than nothing—only

‘a weed,  
Flung from the rock, on Ocean’s foam to sail,  
Wher’er the surge may sweep, the tempest’s breath prevail.’ ”

## CHAPTER XXXII

A MYSTERIOUS LOVE. SIMONSON'S FLIGHT FROM RICHMOND

DURING the almost eleven "solitary" months, February to January, Simonson never saw the Commandant's wife; and though he often heard about her the references were always incidental, elidical, elliptical, the verbal photographs always being the merest silhouettes.

That she was tall and stately, grave and dignified and, like the fairy elf Elaine, beautiful, he had not a single doubt.

He also surmised that she was tenderly and broodingly sorrowful; that somehow, somewhere, somewhen, there had been a great tragedy in her life, a shadow that lifted nevermore.

This, however, was a mere conjecture based on such intangible evidence as the lowering of the husband's and the daughter's voices whenever they spoke of her; a wistful look in Elaine's eyes and a pathetic drooping of her usually merry lips; and always on the part of both a winsome vocal caressingness in speaking of "Our Heloise."

But though husband and daughter never permitted a day to pass without seeing him, *she* never came, never sent any message.

Incidentally Simonson had learned that Heloise Turney was a Dinwiddie, one of the historic Dinwiddies who in the Middle Ages had allied themselves with William the Conqueror and, with him, had gone to France; that her grandfather, the great Baron Esterhazy Dinwiddie, had been one of Napoleon's Field-M Marshals at Waterloo; and that her

father when a young man had fled for his life to Charleston, South Carolina, where he had married Gabrielle Elaine Monteagle, only daughter of Pierre Monteagle, Governor of the Commonwealth and son of that Honoré Monteagle who had come over with the Marquis de Lafayette and fought with Washington for American Independence; that she, Heloise, had been educated in Paris at the Ecole Notre Dame des Champs; that at twenty, a year after graduating, she had married Thomas P. Turney, of the distinguished Hillary Potter Turney family, who at the time of their marriage was a banker-politician and member of her father's gubernatorial staff; that she was the mother of three children, only one of whom, Elaine, had survived; and, finally, that she was a devout Catholic—all learned, however, from passing remarks, incidental or parenthetical.

What wonder the name "Heloise" came to be very musical to Simonson, and that its cultured and devout bearer was at last idealized to sainthood?

Only once was he invited to the Commandant's home. In citizen dress, full bearded, razors not being permitted in Libby Prison, and accompanied by Major Turney, no one would have recognized him as the Samuel Simonson of other days; and he often reflected that it was strange, considering the high regard in which he was evidently held by Elaine and her father, he had never been invited to their home.

Indeed they had often jokingly referred to their rudeness in monopolizing so much of his time, and selfishness in requiring him to bear all the burdens and perform all the offices of hospitality; and once Elaine, when alone with him, had struck a deeper note that had startled him and set his pulses to beating to swifter and happier rhythms than he had thought possible again.

It was an afternoon in October. There was the wildest



excitement in Richmond, occasioned by Sheridan's debonairly galloping with his troopers entirely around the Confederate Capitol; and Benjamin, the *Hebrew* Secretary of State, subsequently declared that only Sheridan's *Irish* chivalry prevented him from promenading into the city and paying his respects to President Davis at the Executive Mansion.

But now the intelligence had been received that General Kilpatrick was mercilessly slaughtering the Confederate officers and sentinels at Belle Isle, and setting the Federal prisoners free—the unsuccessful expedition in which the brave Ulric Dahlgren lost his life—and that soon they would be storming the walls of Libby Prison.

In the deep gloom of the prison Simonson could not see Elaine's face distinctly; but he knew, by her agitated breathing and trembling voice, that she was greatly frightened and excited. He strove as best he could to quiet her fears and allay her excitement; but this was not easily done on account of the unusual shuffling of feet overhead, and the clattering of flying hoofs on the pavement without; and presently, when a deafening volley was fired for the purpose of intimidating the prisoners and keeping them away from the windows she trembled violently and sought his hand.

"Have no fear, Elaine," he entreated.

"Oh, I haven't for *myself*."

"For whom then should you be afraid?" having no thought of himself. "Your home is guarded, and your father has all the troops of the Capitol at his command." Unconsciously all the while he was pressing her hand in a manner that bid fair to break or dislocate several delicate bones—though strangely enough Elaine, at the time, was not conscious of any pain.

"But," pressing closer, "what if they should be successful

and, in the confusion and excitement, an angry guard should *kill* you, or your comrades should take you away so that I—I should never, never see you again, and—and——”

“O—*Elaine!*”

“O *my* Captain!”

The next moment she was sobbing on his breast, and he was saying and doing all those things that men, so blissfully circumstanced, have said and done since the first lithe and winsome form yielded to strong encircling arms, and the first lips, coquettishly denied a single instant, uplifted freely all their honied sweets.

Now all fear was gone. Possibly they hoped Kilpatrick wouldn't come; or if he did come there wouldn't be any casualties—but even for these tender and pious hopes on their part we cannot vouch. But we are safe in asserting that, consciously or sub-consciously, they fervently prayed that if Kilpatrick *must* come he would be *greatly* delayed, and that when he arrived he might encounter (without casualties, however) such tremendous obstacles as would leave them undisturbed a long time.

How blissfully *delicious* were the days and weeks that followed—October, November, and December!

Love had come without invitation, indeed without observation, at least on Simonson's part. After the tempest through which he had passed—sickness and disappointment, tragedy and war—his eyes and ears were sealed, his tongue mute, and his heart dead to all earthly transports, or so he thought. He had been swept almost beyond control, indeed, till reason had reeled and life itself had hung in a balance, by two women of beauty and character, by two lures of love. But now he was done with love, and he was done with women; for to him all womankind was comprehended in the two types: Marjorie and Vergie. He was not thinking of love, least of all looking for it, or desiring it. He

had not become a misogynist, nor was he at all bitter, or morose, or misanthropic—he had simply failed in the great quest. After Marjorie and Vergie there never could be any third girl or woman. He didn't exactly say so—he took it for granted; and both he deemed irrevocably lost to him. He was not definitely unhappy—it was rather a state of dazed or suspended sensation: no feeling at all, or desire, or expectation. Life's phrase or paragraph for him had closed with a double period—the passion life: Vergie's rejection of him, and Marjorie's marriage to Harold Culpepper; and he was too honorable, even had he been a-mind, to go philandering after another man's wife.

Also—he was a hated prisoner. No woman would think of such as he, least of all of the lovely women of the lordly South.

And Elaine—? In Marjorie Gildersleeve and Virginia Culpepper, queenliness in height and form, and the ideals of blonde and brunette, found their highest expression; but Elaine was definitely neither the one or the other. After the stately Marjorie and Vergie, Elaine seemed to be (if he thought of instituting comparisons) little more than a child. Though her face was exceedingly fair to look upon, and her hair was chestnut-brown, her eyes, large and luminous, were neither turquoise or ebon, but more like the topaz or beryl—yet singularly expressive of all that she thought and felt. Petite, “perfectly formed as a Grecian vase of alabaster,” she scarce more than came to his shoulders. The impression of childlikeness was doubly deepened by her unusual frankness, and fervency and openness of mind, such as is commonly associated with childhood—an innocent directness and confidingness not uncommon among Southern girls, but almost wholly unknown to their Northern sisters.

Simonson's first feeling toward her was rather paternal until marking it one day, Elaine gaily said, “You forget,



sir, that there are fewer than three years between us. You see that, despite my wee-ness, I'm but three years your junior."

"Ah, is that so, my Rose?" laughingly.

"No; rather your *Eglantine*, if you must floralize," gaily. "I'm not large enough to be likened to the American Beauty Rose, you gallant flatterer."

"Thanks for the correction, my fair and fragrant *Eglantine*; but you forget that the *eglantine* is a rose and not a honeysuckle and," with a sudden thrill that betrayed itself in his voice, "of all roses my *Eglantine* is the dearest and sweetest."

Thus had it begun—but unlike any emotion he had ever experienced was the love that now tipped every passing moment with a resplendent apocalypse. Naught lacking, all possessing; yet there had been no maddening passion—his soul was calm as a tideless sea. Elaine came and went—there was all-satisfying rapture but no anxiety, no anguish, no harrowing apprehension. Her voice throbbed and cadenced with contagious joy, but into it came no diminished third, consecutive fifth, haunting minor, or fleeting dissonance or enharmonic; an ecstasy, peaceful, restful, soothing as love-lilt of velvet-voiced thrush at dusk to its mate—withal exhilarating, and triumphant as song of skylark rising from its dewy bed ambrosial to greet the nascent morn with symphonies of grateful song. His arm about her, and her head a-pillow on his bosom, but no awakening of the mad desire that cost Cleopatra her diadem, and Marc Antony the Roman Empire.

When he had thought he had wronged Harold by plucking the pomegranates of God's Elysian that were his, and his alone, from Marjorie's lips, he had besought the mercy of heaven for his sacrilege and found no peace for many days. When he had awakened from his passionate pilgrimage with

Vergie, and the glory of the terrestrial had paled before the greater glory of the celestial, he had been so stricken with remorse he had revowed fidelity to the terrestrial, and sought expiation for his infidelity in the purgatorial fires of War. But now all the delights of satisfaction were his, every flower of love, every musk-laden breeze, with no remorse, or feverish and unsatisfied desire.

Their love for each other was so elemental, fundamental, essential to their very being, he told Elaine one day that he had always loved her; that he had loved her before he had ever met her; that his love for her sprang from a divine necessity because she was a part of himself, for the moment forgetting who he was; and to his boundless delight, not unmixed with pleasurable astonishment that it should be so, she had instantly declared the same feeling and conviction regarding the source and nature of her love for him—and it was all so easy, restful, natural.

It was on the afternoon of the last day of the year that the invitation was given to speed the old year, and to welcome the new, at the Commandant's residence. Tender as had become the bond between the warden and his prisoner, and surpassingly sweet the relation existing between the prisoner and Elaine, now perhaps his greatest pleasure came from the thought of at least beholding the wonderful Heloise, Elaine's mother, and his—*mystery*.

But he was disappointed. Escorted by the Commandant, and in citizen-dress provided by him, his mind was busy with thoughts of Heloise Turney: how she would appear, what she would say, what would be her bearing toward him—but a colored servant in livery, gray-haired and deferential, opened the door, and in the parlor only Elaine was waiting to receive them.

His eyes sought the absent mistress, a look which did not escape the Commandant's attention; and Elaine, who also

had observed it, at once said, "Mama's not at home. She went to Charleston this morning to pay Grandpapa and Grandmama a long-deferred visit."

Of course, he did not show his disappointment, and the evening, for one reason at least, became memorable.

It was now almost ten o'clock. They were but comfortably seated, however, when Major Turney was summoned to a secret conclave. Smiling on Elaine, a smile which also included Simonson in his benevolent regard and kindly affection, he said, "Daughter, I shall parole my prisoner to you."

"He'll be perfectly safe in my hands, Papa," was her gay rejoinder.

But Major Turney had not been gone more than ten minutes when Lieutenant Abner Turney, the Major's cousin, and noted for his fanatical hatred of all Northerners, strode into the room—*unannounced*.

Elaine and Simonson were startled, for the peril was great. If Lieutenant Abner were to recognize the Commandant's guest he would instantly arrest him, regardless of consequences; for he was a very determined man.

Elaine, however, rose to the occasion and promptly presented "Mr. James Overton, of Savannah." Adding, "As Uncle Abner has never visited Savannah, Mr. Overton, perhaps he would enjoy hearing some descriptions of the quaint old city," thus giving him opportunity to romance about a place concerning which she was confident he knew nothing, yet without peril of being found out.

But the fire-eating Abner was in a hurry and, only remarking on the striking resemblance between "Mr. Overton and a certain damned Yankee named Simonson, whom our truckling President for months has been pampering like a prince," turned and strode out of the house.

Thanking their stars for their deliverance, Elaine in-



structed the servitor at the door to admit no one except her father—not even the President.

Now feeling themselves safe, they surrendered themselves to those little ardors so dear to lovers, pleasures in the present instance enhanced by the fact that this was their first tête-à-tête outside a prison wall. The fire glowed on the broad and ample hearth, the great clock on the stair measured off the hours and minutes and seconds, and a cricket somewhere complained of the bitter cold. Elaine brought a little wine; a few rare old books, and a new one untranslated, by Victor Hugo, were examined and discussed; and Elaine sang, to her own accompaniment, a beautiful chanson—her mother's favorite, as she explained.

All-radiant she arose from the piano. Simonson enfolded her in his arms and thought how sweet it would be if they were now one forever; if this were their home; if there were no more cruel wars nor partings. And those things of which he was thinking she, slyly stealing her hand into his, immediately articulated into speech.

Then they made a tour of the room, looking at the paintings and family portraits, many of the latter in uniform, and covered with medals and decorations. There were the great Dinwiddies, father and son, the Turneys, of high repute; and Dinwiddie and Turney women famed for their beauty, chastity, and many accomplishments. Last of all Elaine exhibited the picture of "Our Heloise."

"And is that your mother's picture?"

"Yes; don't you think she's beautiful?"

"O Elaine," tears welling up in his eyes, "she's an angel—the most beautiful, the divinest woman I ever saw."

Elaine then related how her mother sat for Pietro Benvenuto, in Paris, just before her great affliction, adding, "You know, Mama has never been quite the same since then."

Simonson did not know, but delicacy forbade inquiry. Other thoughts, too, were crowding in upon him. Here he was at the very heart of the Old Dominion consecrated by highborn, immortal heroes; he was of St. Joseph, Missouri. Holding in his arms the fairest offspring of that glorious Homeric *regime*—he, the son of Abe Simonson! His soul was full to overflowing.

“O Elaine, my sweetest Eglantine, Love of my Soul, I do not deserve you. I’m too basely born. I’d be a disgrace to you, to the illustrious ones whose blood flows in your veins, a dishonor to your House.”

“Dearest,” she replied, “I know not what you mean, nor to what you refer; nor do I care to know. But I do know what my Papa and the President say. They say that, though you’re a Northerner, and at war with our beloved Confederacy, you’re nevertheless a gentleman; and that in character, ability, and noble principles you are one of us. Do you understand? One of Us! And I know that *they* know—that you *are* one of us.

“Believe me, Dearest, and you must not laugh at me,” demurely; “I do not feel toward you as I’ve felt toward other young men. Somehow you are *sacred* to me.”

“But come,” now laughing, “we must not yield to melancholy. It’s been so long since you’ve seen a real home I must show you ours.”

She took a silver candlestick containing a wax taper and piloted him from room to room, commenting or explaining at each room: parlor, second-parlor, family sitting room, on and on, upstairs and downstairs, after the manner of the oldtime East End mansions, but few of which at the present time remain.

Now they were upstairs. “And this is Papa’s office, this is our sewing room, this Papa’s sleeping room, this Mama’s,

this mine, and this will be yours when this cruel war is over and you shall come to visit us, and this——”

She had paused at a door opening into a room much larger than the rest, and by far more elegantly furnished—rich rugs and carpets and tapestries, sumptuous chairs and divans and lounges with inviting cushions, dressing case with all the appurtenances, magnificent bed with baldachin and canopy, and counterpane white as virgin snow.

With a tumult of emotion, all the sweets of domesticity being suggested by the vision of a room fit to be the bridal chamber of a queen, even of one of Shakespeare's or of Tennyson's fairest and most bewitching, he exclaimed, “And this——?”

“Dear Love,” she whispered, by her manner beseeching a kiss and a lovely embrace, “when you come, when you come for sure, *every* room shall be—OURS!”

He held her in his arms, how long he knew not; kissed her, how often neither of them could tell, for Love is a poor mathematician, has no hourglass or horoscope, and disdains all chronologies.

Presently, however, they were aroused by the clatter of hoofs on the pavement. Laughing lightly, she said, “You stay here, and I'll go to the window and reconnoitre.”

But in a moment she was back again. “Sammy, for your own sake and for Papa's, you must flee for your life. It's General Winder, and Uncle Abner's with him. Uncle doesn't like Papa, thinks he's too easy on the prisoners; and he's recognized you and reported to General Winder. Here! Here's a suit of Papa's, and an overcoat—*Confederate*. They'll fit you, and help you to escape. I'll go to the door and keep them out as long as possible. Don't wait to change here—they'll have the house surrounded in a minute. There's the backstairs—the yard—the garden—King George Street—you know the rest. Good-bye! God bless



you! God keep you!" Already she was descending the stairs.

"Yes! Yes, General Winder, Uncle Abner, I'm coming. I'd just gone to my room to retire for the night.

"Yes; Papa hasn't returned yet. Must be at the Executive Mansion, though I'm not sure. I only know he was called out and didn't expect to be gone long.

"Who? Of whom are you speaking? Samuel Simonson? Captain Simonson? Why, really, Uncle Abner, are we Southern girls accustomed to associating with culprits, jail-birds, vagabonds, riff-raff?

"And do you accuse *me* of sheltering, nay accepting the lovelier attentions, of Yankee crackers?

"Oh, yes, General, Uncle did indeed find a gentleman here; but is it not proper for a young lady of twenty-odd summers to receive visits from her fiancé? If not, you must speak to Papa, Major Turney, and to my fiancé, Mr. James Overton, of Savannah, whom Uncle saw here, and has mistaken for some renegade Yankee cracker; and with the rare delicacy of Southern chivalry, and the fine breeding and sense of honor of a Southern gentleman, instead of considering the feelings and reputation of a lady who has the *misfortune* to be his kinswoman, or the honor of a gallant soldier and true patriot, who also chances to be his kinsman, has proceeded, to the extent of his ability, to disgrace me, and cast discredit on my honorable father, by carrying his mis-report and salacious scandal to General Winder, Warden-General of the Prisons of our beloved Confederacy.

"Now I have a new incentive to yield to the pleadings of my fiancé for a speedy consummation of our engagement. As Mrs. James Overton, of Savannah, Georgia, I shall not be associated so frequently in people's thoughts with Lieutenant Abner Turney, of Richmond, Virginia.

"But, gentlemen, General Winder and Lieutenant Turney,

I pray you to come in ; and forgive my incivility in keeping you waiting so long at the threshold.

"I beseech you to carefully search the entire house, that both my revered father, and my unworthy self, happily may be cleared of the odium your visit charges against us."

We have recorded but a part of Elaine's side of the spirited colloquy at the door. Of course, she was talking against time, not for the sake of the argument, or for any impression she might make on their minds regarding her own or her father's guilt or innocence—she was only parleying until Simonson could make good his escape.

And so strong and clear a case did she make out, and with such firmness and mien of injured, nay outraged, innocence, they did not search the house at all ; but, making profound and abject apologies, withdrew, mounted their horses, and dashed away into a new morning and a new year—for the chimes on St. Paul's Cathedral were just ringing out 1864, with all its mingled warp and woof of victory and defeat, shame and glory, life and death ; and ringing in 1865, with all its—but there was none then who could tell what the New Year would bring—only :—*Judah Philip Benjamin, the Jew: the Salathiel of the Davis Administration.*

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### FALL OF RICHMOND. SIMONSON SENTENCED TO DEATH

WHEN Elaine had told General Winder and Lieutenant Abner that her father possibly had gone to the Executive Mansion, she had stated a very remote possibility; as a matter of fact she knew he had *intended* to go in precisely the opposite direction, and she thanked her stars for it, for it was of the utmost importance that she should immediately inform him of the sudden and unexpected turn of affairs.

As Major Turney had passed out of the room he had quietly said to Elaine, "Stanard." She knew that meant Mrs. William Stanard, the great friend of Vice President Stephens, whose residence was a favorite meeting place, sort of Cave of Adullam, of all haters of President Davis, such as Toombs and Seaton, and opponents of his administration, such as Senator Rives and Representative Atkins. It was also the home during his brief sojourns in Richmond, of Vice President Stephens. Major Turney's wealth, family, social connections, popular prestige and known loyalty to the President, caused the bitter malcontents to be wary of him, and eager to secure his favor when planning moves that might be regarded as being, however veiled with specious phrases and protestations, inimical to President Davis or his government. Hence his summons to Richmond's Cave of Adullam.

Of all the malcontents none was as able, persistent, and vindictive as Vice President Stephens; for to intellectual



dissent from the President's policy he added a personal hatred almost without a parallel. Indeed he so hated the President he would have condemned to eternal obloquy any governmental policy, even of his own origination, had it received the approval of President Davis. And Vice President Stephens was only one of a mighty Southern host like-minded, and like-disposed.

Had the South been loyal to *itself*, and to her civil and military leaders, it is by no means improbable that the Confederacy would have compelled recognition at Washington. The Southern Government well might have pointed its accusing finger at a score of her own illustrious sons and, with her dying gasp, exclaimed, "Et tu Stephens, Vance, Brown, Toombs, Rhett, Walker, Rives, Atkins, Hunter, Yancey, J. E. Johnston, Beauregard, Longstreet.

The situation on New Year's eve, 1864, could not have been darker for the grave, sorrowful, but undaunted President at Brockenborough Mansion. Grant had pressed on steadily, advancing even when defeated, was now beleaguering Petersburg and, doubtlessly, was going "on to Richmond"; Sherman was gaily cavorting on to the sea; Sheridan was jauntily having "the time of his life" wherever he might fancy to go, now that Early was disposed of and Stuart was dead; Thomas was in high glee over his phenomenal defeat of Hood and his Army at Nashville; the Alabama and the Albermarle were at the bottom of the sea, the Shenandoah at Liverpool had been handed over by England to the Federal Government at Washington, and not a Confederate flag now was floating above the wave; and, finally, Wilmington and Fort Fisher were in the death throes of impending surrender.

"To consider the present state of affairs" Major Turney had been requested "to meet a number of gentlemen and

true patriots at the residence of Mrs. William Stanard," on this eventful evening.

Fortunately just as Elaine was starting out to warn her father, while the departing General Winder and his troopers were yet in sight, Major Turney appeared.

Rapidly relating to her father the essentials of what had occurred during his absence, however carefully omitting everything that would be calculated to arouse his anger, she besought him to shield the innocent sentinels at the prison, see the President at once and put him in possession of all the facts in the case—and that the two of them should leave every possible loophole open for Simonson's escape.

Despite his own peril Major Turney smiled upon his daughter, gave her a few words of cheer, promised to carry out her instructions to the letter, and proceeded at once to the Prison.

In the meantime Simonson was beginning one of the most arduous, perilous, and baffling series of adventures and hair-breadth escapes in the history of war—all to end at last in recapture, and sentence to death. Repeatedly he was in sight of "Old Glory," often in hearing of Federal camps, thrice within the Federal lines only each time to be driven to cover by wandering bands of Confederate cavalry, or by Confederate pickets set to watch and report the movements of the Federal enemy.

Like a chased fox or hare he raced to every point of the compass, doubled back again, climbed trees, hid in hollow logs, clambered through bogs and tangled underbrush; twice forded the Chickahominy, both times being thoroughly soaked and his clothes frozen; whole days with nothing to eat but roots and berries, dry, hard and tasteless; at last a victim of fever and ague; weak from sickness, exposure, over-exertion, and constant anxiety; trying to snatch a little

sleep and rest on the frozen ground; waking to find his garments, now threadbare and tattered, frozen to the earth, and himself so chilled and numb as to render it almost impossible for him to arise and move on.

Once, having secured some matches at a negro's hut, and feeling that he was freezing to death, he built a fire, regardless of every hazard, in a small and secluded hollow in the centre of a dense mass of cedar trees. The sensation produced by the warmth of the fire, reenforced by intense fatigue to the point of exhaustion, caused him to go to sleep immediately. When he awoke some hours later he found one bootleg and half his uniform burned to ashes.

Greatly refreshed, though weak, he doggedly pressed on. Had it been two months later he would long since have found Federal troops; but now their activities were directed Southward for the capture, under Butler and Porter, of Port Fisher; while Northward Grant was idly, though impatiently, waiting at City Point for the outcome of the conference between the Federal Government and the Peace Commissioners sent by Mr. Davis—Vice President Stephens, Judge Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War, and Senator R. M. T. Hunter. Hence the Confederates, enjoying a respite from Grant's persistent pounding, were ranging the whole country with comparative immunity from peril.

At last the inevitable happened. Emerging from a dense thicket into a small clearing he saw himself confronted by a vicious looking musket not ten feet distant, in the hands of a very resolute "Johnny." Instantly, however, the picket dropped his gun and indifferently said,

"W'ot thuh hell yo' doin' hyar?"

Simonson understood the situation. The picket, seeing his Confederate uniform, had mistaken him for a brother Confederate. He also realized that now, if ever, he had need of coolness and presence of mind.



Assuming an air of unconcern he replied, "Oh, jis skur-mushin' 'roun' uh li'l," imitating the dialect the best he could, "thinkin' Ah mout fin' er shote er suthin'."

The picket was not quite convinced. "Whah's yo' com-man'?"

"Neah 'Melia Coht House." Simonson knew there were Confederate soldiers in that neighborhood; besides it was the only likely place he could think of on the spur of the moment. However, it proved to be an unfortunate answer.

"See hyar, comerd, yo' stringin' muh, else yer uh damned Yank. Moh'n twent' miles tuh 'Mely Coht House. W'ot's yo' reg'mint?"

Simonson was cornered but he blurted out the first thing that came to mind with a prayer that he might hit it right. But Providence doesn't make a specialty of "first aids" to prevaricators, no matter how pressing their needs, or how noble their cause. In this case he could not have made a worse answer.

"To the Tenth Alabama," was his reply.

Instantly the gun was leveled on him again. "Yo' muh pris-nuh. Move 'long. Git!"

Even the eloquence of a Demosthenes is not as "moving" as a vicious gun in the hands of a determined man.

The decisive action of the picket was due to the fact that he, himself, belonged to the Tenth Alabama, in camp less than a mile away, and knew this man did not belong to the famous "Alabama Tigers."

Half an hour later Simonson was before the colonel of the Tenth Alabama, listening to the proud picket's report.

Having warmly commended the picket the officer turned to the prisoner and said, "Glad to meet you again." Then turning to a sergeant: "See that this *spy* is decked out in proper regalia—handcuffs and anklets—and securely guarded."

Appalled at the situation, Simonson exclaimed, "But, colonel, there must be some mistake. You—"

"Oh, no! The mistake is on *your* part," replied the colonel, with a laugh that boded ill for the captive. "Privation and exposure for, let's see, this is the Seventeenth, for seventeen days have certainly disfigured you somewhat, and, more than likely, disturbed your mental *equilib*."

"Let me now refresh your memory. Your true name is Samuel Simonson. You were promoted to a captaincy at the Battle of Chickamauga. You were captured at the Battle of Missionary Ridge and, soon after, became our guest at The Lib. Here, through the interposition of Harold Culpepper, you had the undeserved good fortune to be brought to the attention of the President who, out of the goodness of his great kind heart, but in defiance of all law and precedent, made you his guest at the Executive Mansion. You were still farther fortunate in winning the love of the President's niece, Major Culpepper's sister, through whose bewitching cozening you became established as a member of the President's household.

"During those eventful days I was on duty at Richmond, had many conferences with War Secretary Seaton regarding your privileges, and often saw you and Miss Culpepper together.

"Finally Fate grew weary of toying with you and decided to mete out to you your just deserts. Miss Culpepper became disgusted with her cracker suitor, threw him overboard, and departed from the Capitol. Her brother, the Major, played his Uncle Jeffey a scurvy trick. Rambunctious old Seaton shied his castor into the ring, and—once more you were properly, very properly, caged.

"Then, somehow, on New Year's eve, your cussed luck again served you well and, once more, by means we have not yet been able to conjecture, you were scot-free.

"*The President himself must have slipped down and let you out.*

"However, I'm happy to meet you, Captain; and more than happy to see you masquerading in a Confederate uniform. Thus arrayed, not even Beauty will be able to rush to your rescue; and Washington's example in dealing with the gallant Major Andre will stay the interfering hand, and silence the protesting voice, of our Don-Quixotic President.

"*Providence* permitting you will be well housed tonight, and receive *constant* attention; tomorrow you will be visited by a number of very distinguished officials who will obligingly listen to everything you may have to say—incidentally themselves making a few very pertinent remarks, all, however, in a most courteous manner; and on the following day at sunrise you will *depart on a very long journey.*"

It must be confessed that Major Turney's position was anything but enviable; for to the general charge, long wrathfully made, that "Turney is too lenient with Yankee prisoners," now was added a whispered rumor that Lieut. Abner Turney had actually seen the escaped man enjoying the Commandant's hospitality, New Year's eve, at The Cedars; but the Commandant had two staunch and powerful friends in the President and General Winder, the Warden-General, and the President and Commandant secretly hoped that Simonson would make good his escape.

President Davis was justly charged with haughtiness and reticence—all of which was inherited; but he was never severe on any one except himself. Indeed his enemies declared that he was "chicken-hearted in dealing with Yankee prisoners," and some went so far as to affirm that his eleven years in the North—New York, Northern Missouri, Northern Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota—had made him disloyal to the South. Mr. Lincoln was not more eager to



ameliorate the unhappy condition of prisoners of War than was Mr. Davis.

Of General Winder, President Davis declared: "He was a man too brave to be cruel, too well-bred and well-born to be influenced by low and sordid motives." And the Commandant possessed, to the utmost, these two men's confidence.

Lieut. Abner Turney's charge that he had seen, "with my own eyes," Captain Simonson as the sole guest of the beautiful and accomplished Miss Elaine Veronica, at the Commandant's residence on the night of his escape, fell to the ground of its own weight. It was so absurd, preposterous. Besides, every one knew of Abner's radicalism and boundless jealousy of his cousin, the Commandant.

The Commandant was fortunate, too, in being absent when the Lieutenant had unceremoniously ushered himself into Elaine's and Simonson's presence; also in being known to have been at that precise moment in consultation with a number of the rabidest and most vindictive fire-eaters at the residence of Mrs. William Stanard.

However, it is not improbable that public pressure would have compelled the displacement of Major Turney as Warden of Libby Prison but for the unexpected appearance just at that time of Frank P. Blair, a quasi-Peace-Commissioner from Washington.

For the first time it seemed that the Washington Government was holding out the olive branch to the hard-pressed Confederacy; and there was a general disposition, suddenly invoked by the usually belligerent Vice President, to let bygones be bygones, and to make as favorable an impression as possible on the distinguished visitor.

But the all-disturbing occasion of anxiety to the President and Commandant—and supremely so to the unhappy Elaine, when the harrowing intelligence reached her—was

the fact that Captain Simonson had escaped in a Confederate uniform, and that if captured in said Confederate uniform he must be accounted, by the universal law and practice of nations, a *spy*, and sentenced to an ignominious *death*. Not even the President could save him. Thus Love, unwittingly, had placed the one beloved in direst peril of a shameful death.

Such was the suspense the terrible news of the prisoner's recapture had in it an element of relief; but when it was learned, a few hours later, that he had been captured in Confederate uniform Elaine's grief and despair knew no bounds.

To her father who had brought her the news she frankly said, "I love him, and cannot live without him."

Major Turney knew his daughter entertained a high regard for the prisoner, but hitherto had ascribed her interest in him to pity and compassion; but now, beyond the simple significance of her emphatic declaration, he noted a something entirely new in her voice—the unearthly music of a heavenly love.

The Major was both disturbed and distressed. It occurred to him that maybe the Captain had taken advantage of the unusual privileges accorded him and had surreptitiously wooed his daughter, and inveigled her into a clandestine promise to marry him. All this Elaine quickly noted.

"Papa, dearest," she said beseechingly, "Captain Simonson ever has been the soul of honor, and so have I; you don't doubt me, do you, Papa? Captain Simonson never wooed me at all—I just naturally loved him from the very first; and it seems he couldn't keep from loving me, too. And our love for each other is so sweet and sacred—why it's just like a holy sacrament. I know, dearest Papa, that it's a holy love because there's nothing in it feverish, or unrestful, or disturbing, and it's *so* satisfying. And it's

such a mysterious love. I don't know when it began; it was already full-fledged when I found it—and the Captain says the same regarding his love for me. Why, Papa, it just seems that our love for each other is as old as Eternity and that, somehow, *the hand of God is in it.*”

Deeply distressed, Major Turney besought the advice and assistance of the President. His daughter's state of mind alarmed him. Her mother had never entirely recovered from the shock of the great tragedy that had come to them more than thirty years before—was his daughter now to have her life blasted? If Captain Simonson were to be executed God alone could tell what the effect would be on Elaine.

Moreover, the Major's own heart was enlisted in behalf of the ill-starred Captain. From the first he had been strangely drawn to the manly young fellow. Only for this, and his faith in his integrity, he never would have permitted his daughter to visit him, at least unattended. Yes, for Elaine's sake, and for his own peace of mind, he must save Captain Simonson from his impending fate.

Approaching the Executive Mansion he met Mr. Blair, the quasi-Envoy from Mr. Lincoln, accompanied by Mr. Stephens. They had been in conference with Mr. Davis. As they met, Mr. Stephens stopped and said,

“Mr. Blair, I want you to know Major Turney, Commandant of Libby Prison. Does he appear to be the merciless persecutor of prisoners he's reputed to be?”

The two men cordially shook hands and indulged in the usual compliments. After a few general remarks, meaning nothing and not intended to mean anything, Mr. Blair remarked,

“By the way, Stephens, I see in Pollard's paper that you've captured Captain Simonson, and that, being found in your uniform, he'll be accounted a spy.”



"Unquestionably," replied Mr. Stephens, who was a great lawyer.

"And does that mean he must be executed?"

"Even the President, I mean President *Davis*, couldn't save him," promptly replied the Vice President. "You must know, Mr. Blair, that the offense of being a spy is unpardonable. You remember the case of the lamented Major Andre."

"Ah, yes, you're right, you're right. But this'll be a great grief to Lincoln. Seems that Old Abe knows Simonson—took a fancy to him back in Illinois. Had lost track of him—thought he was with Sherman down South somewhere till he read in the New York papers of his sensational escape. The President, I mean *THE* President," nudging Stephens, "has oodles and oodles of sentiment, you know."

The Vice President was thoughtful a moment. Then: "We might *defer* his execution, pending our negotiations—how would that do?"

"A capital idea, Stephens," enthusiastically. "You see we've a ticklish job on hand, but, my God, I hope and pray we'll be successful. If you were to up and kill Simonson, when everybody knows he was only *technically* a spy, it would raise a hell of a fuss up North; and Old Abe—get his back up and there'll be no doing anything with him!"

Major Turney's interview with the President was brief. Mr. Davis could promise nothing. He liked Blair but had no faith in his mission.

"There'll be no peace," he said, "till we're all ground to powder. My death and Simonson's are equally inevitable and," after a moment's hesitation, "I may beat Simonson to the goal. Of course, I will coöperate with you, but I can't pardon him. Work with Stephens; if he will hold

off his lieutenants maybe we can defer Simonson's execution until—*the end*.

"And, Major, by the way, if you can make the impression on Stephens' mind that you and I are at outs, and that I've turned against both you and Simonson, in fact that now I'm demanding Simonson's immediate execution, it will help a lot. For whatever I'm in favor of Stephens is everlastingly against."

Major Turney received a telegram late in the afternoon stating that the prisoner was being placed on the train at Ruther's Glen, and that he would arrive at Richmond about 8 o'clock that evening.

Accordingly the Major was at the North station when the train arrived. There was grave danger of mob violence which, on account of Mr. Blair's presence in the city, and the ill effect the intelligence would have on the North, and on Mr. Lincoln, must be avoided at all hazards. Though a troop of cavalry was in readiness in case there should be disorder but happily there was none, at least at the Station.

It was not until they had reached the Prison that there was any sign of trouble. There a mob of the veriest riff-raff had gathered and was indulging in all manner of vile and ferocious threats and epithets. A man of less courage and determination would have retreated, or ordered up the military.

All went well, however, till they had almost reached the main entrance when some one shouted, "Shoot the damned Yankee! Shoot the G— d— Lincoln *spy!*"

At the same moment a revolver was fired, then pandemonium reigned. The guards imagined that an effort was being made to release the prisoner; Major Turney thought it was a diversion, carefully planned, under cover of which to kill him; while the mob didn't think at all—just yelled, and struggled, and fought like demons.

Fortunately the cavalry was only a couple of blocks distant and soon were on the scene, scattering the mob in every direction.

The only person seriously hurt was the prisoner. Standing upright and helpless, feet and hands heavily manacled, one of the rear guards dealt him a deadly blow on the head with the butt of his musket. The wanton act was not to be wondered at considering the tumult, and the many prisoners who, in various ways, had succeeded in making their escape.

Major Turney thought Captain Simonson had been shot, not having seen the guard deal the savage blow, and that he was dead. That he really was dead could hardly be disputed—he lay so still, and with such a ghastly countenance.

Ordering the guards to immediately remove the manacles the Major knelt beside the prisoner, tore open his shirt to discover where the bullet had entered, and waved back the surging crowd. Only a moment he looked and then exclaimed, "Oh, my God! my God!"

For only a moment he seemed to have been stricken with blindness—*dazed*—then rising, pale and trembling, calmly ordered the guard to remove the prisoner to a cot in the Hospital.

"But, Major Turney," said the officer of the guard, "he was not shot. See," putting his hand on the prisoner's head as they bore him away, "some one has dealt him a blow on the head."

Major Turney made no reply but followed on into the Hospital, summoned the physicians, and ordered that everything possible be done for the comfort of the prisoner.

"Do all you can for this poor boy. I'm afraid that—that Stephens and Blair will be sorry to hear of this—this damned outrage!" A moment later he added, "I'm sorry, too, but the guard was not to blame. I almost lost my own nerve."



The Commandant retired to his office and the physicians examined the wound.

"Strange how these things get on a man's nerves," said the Old Doctor. "That's the reason—there, keep track of his pulse, carefully—that's the reason I'm always changing from one branch of the service to another. Was with the Chevalier at Antietam, below Hagerstown—God! Couldn't stand it. Got transferred to the General Hospital—turn him on his side, Linvill, there—at Chattanooga. Had to give it up there. Too much moaning and groaning and screaming; too many cadavers disfigured, and disjointed, and abbreviated, and *smashed!* Got transferred—there nurse, hold back that tuft of hair—back to the Chevalier again. Then along came that blue-eyed Bulldog—*Butcher!* A week of the Wilderness—you weren't there? *Wow!*

"Keeping track of his heart, Davy Doc? Good! Well, then His High-Mightiness, that's the Emperor up at Brockenborough Castle, took pity on me—steady, Linvill; say, old man, don't believe you've got any nerves at all—took pity on me and pulled me up, root and branch, and planted me here. *Goshdoodlemedictum!* I know what's the matter with the Comman'. Had 'em myself, *nerves*. *Whatafallinupstairs!* But wasn't he pale? Geminyjane!

"What did the Comman' say 'bout Stephens and—what's his name? Oh, yes, Blair. I tell you—there, Linvill, turn him over and let's take a squint at the other side of his block—all this talk about peace don't amount to a tinker's darn.

"But old Am—that's Herr Mephisto, the Comman's coz—hear 'bout it? So all-fired mad on 'count o' being sat down on so hard by the Emp and Warden-Gen. and Boss here he now swears that he *did* see this laddybuck—there, hold his head a wee mite higher; guess we'll have to, hell! that's *bad*—at the Comman's house that night; and that Elaine—what

did you say, Linvill? Wonder if—Dan Cupid *is* a hell of a cuss when he gets started; but Dan had no chance there. But Elaine! Wouldn't blame anybody for going kersmash, kerflummix—how's his pulse? B'lieve you can *smell* a man's pulse, Dave—better give him a hype of strich—Oh, yes, Elaine! Danged if I didn't, old a codger as I am, jump off the sidewalk and turn a double-handspring the first time I saw her. She was coming down the street wearing one of those fluffy white things, mostly ruffles and ribbons and *sich*, an' carryin' a parasol not bigger'n your hand, and, oh! Je-mi-mee! But this poor duffer's a *goner*!"

The pre-doomed Peace Conference lasted but two weeks, and on the Fifth of February the Commissioners returned to Richmond—*empty-handed*!

Mr. Davis was not surprised, and therefore not disappointed.

The unhappiest man in Richmond was the now thoroughly discredited Vice President. Every one now saw—what the President long had seen, and the great Jew long had declared, even to his chief—that there could be no solution of their difficulties except the utter extinction of the Government at Washington, or the utter annihilation of the Government at Richmond. And eighteen months before the *finale del tragedia* the eagle-eyed Salathiel had declared *which* Government would be annihilated. But to the very last the indomitable Jew was supremely loyal to his great Chief.

After a fortnight it was thought the crisis was past; but the patient was very weak—"not strong enough to kill," the Old Doctor remarked when some one mentioned the Court-Martial that was being delayed by his illness.

Heloise Turney, Elaine's mother, who had returned from

Charleston, knew nothing of the tragedy that had had its beginning in her own home; or of that greater tragedy—love, longing, regret, remorse—that was going on in her daughter's heart. The great War-tragedy was telling on her, and husband and daughter were keeping the news of events from her as much as possible.

Grimly now the Major went about his business. He had been blamed so long, and for so much, his endurance was almost exhausted. The color was gone from his face, the snap and fire from his eyes, and the elasticity from his once-strident step. Certainly he had enough to try his soul.

Now there was talk of a general massacre of the prisoners—a peril that was ever before him; a horror he would prevent, or at least try to prevent, even at the cost of his life.

Sherman was coming from the South—had already reached Columbia. Grant was coming from the North—had stationed his dauntless commanders, and marshalled his all-conquering army, along the James. Doom could not much longer be postponed. What wonder there was consternation in Richmond, and deep and prolonged mutterings of vengeance against the Federal prisoners?

Such high hopes had been raised by Envoy Blair's visit and now, in only two weeks, seemingly all earth and hell had turned against them—and heaven no longer heard or heeded their prayers.

Daily Major Turney saw Simonson; but his visits were short, his words few.

"Something's wrong," the patient one day querulously remarked. The Old Doctor blurted, "Something! Hell and damnation, *everything's* wrong!"

The Major forbade Elaine to visit the Hospital. Elaine insisted. The Major was adamant, peremptory. Elaine



was shocked. Never before had her father treated her so—what could it all mean? She pressed him for reasons.

"My God, Elaine," he exclaimed, "will you break my heart? Isn't my word sufficient? Don't you know the city is a cage of infuriated wild beasts? That every street is thronged with thugs and assassins? Don't you realize that the Enemy, hundreds of thousands strong, is thundering at our gates. Haven't I told you repeatedly that a double massacre may occur at any moment—both within and without the Prison? Must I still further remind you that—"

"O, Papa, Papa," Elaine broke in, tears streaming down her face, "I *must* see the Captain, *my* Captain! You don't know what love means, or, or how I love—*him!*"

"Girl!"

There was something in his face and manner that terrified her. His countenance was writhing, and his whole body was convulsed. Had taunt and trial and torture maddened her father? Was he being bereft of reason? Had anxiety and weariness and suffering crazed him? Had she plunged the dagger into her father's heart?

"Papa!" she screamed, throwing her arms about his neck. "Forgive me! Forgive your little girl! I was cruel, heartless, fiendish, to say such a thing to you. To *you*, the dearest, kindest, lovingest of fathers. Of course, you know what it is to love. Was ever such love lavished on woman as you have given in gladdest, richest measure to poor, dear, sweet Mama, and your naughty, naughty little girl? And we couldn't live without you. O, Papa, say that you forgive me! And that—"

"Elaine Veronica," he replied, with a voice full of tragedy and unearthly longing, low and deep, but inexpressibly tender, "care for your mother, and—and *pray* for me!"

"But, Papa, what do you mean?" Elaine was terrified, shaken to her profoundest depths.

Gently taking her in his arms and pressing a kiss on her forehead, he slowly and solemnly said,

"My daughter, you're a Turney and a Dinwiddie. You know our combined motto: 'Fear Nothing, Brave Everything, Falter Never.' You will not fall short of your training and of your ancestry, and I—must set you the example. I have taken a vow; Heaven has witnessed it; only my own soul and Heaven know what it is. But to that vow I must be true, no matter what the cost may be. Some day you may know—Possibly I shall live——"

"But, Papa—that horrible massacre——"

"Hush, Elaine! I know what you're about to say. Have you so soon forgotten the teaching of our blessed Saviour? 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man'—you remember? And not only have I to protect my imperiled wards, but—have you forgotten our—*guest*—with whom we have eaten—*salt?*—with whom—and the Court-Martial—take care of your mother——"

Elaine found herself alone. For a moment everything seemed to be blurred, indistinct. She felt dazed, as one waking from a troubled dream. Slowly she collected her thoughts, putting this, and that, and the other together, and praying for strength.

"My papa means to die; but I must not give way to grief," she said. "I could see it in his face. The sound of his voice brought the chill of the sepulchre to my heart. The look in his eyes was as the low gleam of altar-lights—when masses are said for the *dead*. There was a pathos, holy unction, in his manner, as though a priest were celebrating the last offices for the dead—at *his own funeral*. The low, sad rhythm of his speech reminds me of funeral bells and dirges, of vested choirs in subdued tones chanting *misereres* for the dead, and *misericordias* for the sorrowing. Faithful—he means to die, if need be, for the prisoners; to be the

first to meet the mob; and the first to fall in their defense. Loyal—he also means to save the *Captain* or die . . . the Captain ate salt with us, was our guest, and my papa is a gentleman and a—*hero*. ‘Greater love hath no man than this’—and my papa has this *greater* love. And I upbraided my papa; what a shameful daughter I was! But he forgave me, and I shall *not* fail him! Even though the *worst* happens that *can* happen I shall not fail my papa! ‘Fear Nothing, Brave Everything, Falter Never’—I shall be a true Turney, and I shall be a true Dinwiddie! Ah, Mama’s calling—and I shall not fail my mama! Maybe I shall have to take my papa’s place, and be to Mama—yes, Mama, I hear you—I’m coming—”

There were whole days and nights now that the Commandant did not leave the prison, or sleep, and scarcely partook of food. Massacres were planned within and without the prison, all alike meaning death to the Commandant. Sherman still was thundering Northward, drawing nearer each day. Grant—oh, if he only would let up one day, one hour, a minute even—but never. Three o’clock a. m.—the tramp of infantry, the rush of cavalry, the crash of riflery, the thunder of artillery; and all the night long marching, marching, marching. Reports were coming from all directions, and always the same. Day and night, everywhere—the shriek and crash and rattle and roar and thunder of minie and bomb and shell and shrapnel and grape and canister; and every day, every hour, every minute, approaching nearer, nearer, and yet nearer. And poor Bobby Lee and his devoted Field-Marshal—harassed, perplexed, bewildered, bedraggled, and no chance to rest or sleep! And the brave, brave Boys in Gray, too weak, weary, hungry, starving, to any more raise the “rebel yell”—most of their comrades prisoners now, or else sleeping the long, long sleep



that knows no waking, "in those green tents whose doors never outward swing."

And Richmond, poor Richmond—"how hath the mighty fallen!" Good Bishop Johns was saying: "My people are nearly all gone, and I'm as a shepherd bereft of his flock. And everywhere such sacrilege! My Episcopal City has become a cage of wild beasts—a pandemonium! Such shocking profanity! Such appalling irreverence! Such an insatiate fury for vengeance. Heavenly Father, the provocation is great, numberless are our wrongs, our humiliation is boundless, our chastisement seems greater than we can bear—have mercy upon us, and save my people from impiety! Save them from deeds of violence! Save them from the wrath that goeth before destruction!"

In the mad excitement—it was now the Second of April—the Commandant hoped the peril of mob violence was past; that hopelessness would awe the furious malcontents without, raging for vengeance and demanding the blood of the prisoners committed to his care; and that hope would quell the turbulent prisoners, seeing their deliverance could not long be delayed—and these hopes were realized.

There was another hope—that the Court-Martial might not set to pass on the punishment to be meted out to Captain Simonson; or should it set, and sentence of death be passed, there would be no demand for its speedy execution—but this hope was not realized.

It is unnecessary to relate how it all came about. Sufficient to say the action, though legal, was irregular and without precedent. It was possible only on account of the universal confusion, and the ignoring of all rules and forms of procedure—and was inspired by a cruel desire for revenge. Thwarted in the one great enterprise upon which they had embarked, they would centre all wrath and fury on a single individual, and by one single act declare and

illustrate their irreconcilable hatred and their insatiate thirst for vengeance.

The members of the Court-Martial appeared at the Prison without previous announcement, entered without invitation, and, without ceremony, summoned Commandant and alleged spy.

The questions asked were purely perfunctory—as their verdict was predetermined, and the sentence fixed.

The accused entered no defense—he knew it would be useless to do so; and the Commandant received, without comment, his instructions to execute the death penalty, within the Prison, at 8 o'clock the following morning.

It was all very formal, very precise, and, in form and expression, technically legal to the very letter.

Late that night the Commandant, not having been home now for upwards of forty-eight hours, wrote a long letter to his daughter, Elaine Veronica. Having read it he tore it up. He then wrote another, read it, added some things, and made a good many erasures, and a few verbal changes. He then re-wrote it, re-read it and, being satisfied, enclosed it in an envelope and addressed it to his daughter, adding, just beneath the address, "Not to be opened until 8 a. m., April 3d," and sent it by carrier to his residence.

It was now past midnight. He left his office and went to one of the cages. The prisoner was awake and greeted him with unusual cheeriness.

"Would the prisoner like a priest or minister?"

"No—the prisoner has already prepared for death."

"Would he like to have a Bible?"

"No—he already knows enough of it to give him the needed strength and consolation."

"Is the prisoner afraid to die?"

"No—neither on battlefield, nor within prison walls."

"Does he—he blame the Commandant, or feel any resentment against him?"

"Blame the Commandant? No! A thousand times, No! It is easier to love the Commandant as a worthy son loves an honorable father—as Elaine loves her father. Forgive the prisoner if he is over-bold, but the Commandant well knows, sir, that the prisoner already is legally dead, as in a few hours, alas, he will be actually dead—for such a father as Elaine's, sir, the prisoner would rejoice to die, if need be, to save the beloved Commandant's life, or to promote his happiness and well-being!"

"You are to die in the great room out here."

"Yes, sir."

"I shall be with you at the last."

"I thank you, sir. It will be easier to die if I know that you are near me, even though my eyes are bound and I shall not be able to see you."

"Good-night, Captain Simonson."

"Good-night, Mr. Commandant."

The prisoner reflected that, ordinarily, he would better snatch a few hours' sleep, but now—what matter?

Besides, how good and kind the Commandant! It was pleasant to think of him. He could not think of another man, he did not believe there was another man in all the world quite the equal of the Commandant; and he said so—to himself.

And the Commandant's wife—Heloise! Strange he never should have seen her. What could have been the tragedy that had shut her in? Physical? Not that. "Our Heloise is so well today," how often he had heard them say! "Our Heloise"—always it was "Our Heloise!" What sweet, gentle, gracious, pathetic proprietorship! "Our Heloise"—gathered flowers, ferns, autumn-leaves today. "Our Heloise"



—would like to be, to have, to go. No matter; it must always be according to the desire of "Our Heloise."

Only one thing biographical, explanatory, or descriptive could the Captain recall. It was when Elaine, with a haunting pathos, had said, "My dear, sweet mama has never been quite the same since——" but even the single sentence was not completed.

Sometimes a pictured face haunts us: "Beatrice," "La Fornarina," "The Sorrowing Magdalen;" sometimes a name: "Brunehilde," as Winkelman used to pronounce it; "Juliet," as pronounced by Edwin Booth; "Desdemona," as Salvini alone could utter it.

So to the Captain there came to be a magic in "Our Heloise," and in the picture of her he had seen that New Year's eve.

He wished *he* might say, "*Our* Heloise," as the Major so devoutly pronounced it, as Elaine so tenderly phrased it—and with the same sense of ownership. Well, maybe in the next world, now close at hand—

But how could he think of the Commandant, and "Our Heloise," without also thinking of——

Elaine Veronica? Elaine——

She would have come to see him but her father——

And the Commandant was right. The Commandant always was right. Who could find fault with *him*?

The Commandant was going to be with him at the—and see him—and that would be such a satisfaction, comfort.

Would he give the final order to the firing squad?—he hoped not. Still if he did—if he—did—it would be all—*right*. But——

Elaine Veronica—She *had* obeyed her father, yet she had visited him, the prisoner.

It was on an April evening. There had been a sudden lilt of song—the chanson, just a fragment of it, she had

sung *that* night--and a rose had fallen at his feet: flung from the street through the bars of the tiny window of the basement cell, when the sentry's back was turned. She had brought him a kiss on the petal of a rose. But sweet as was the rose it was infinitely less sweet than the rosebud lips that but a moment before had passionately pressed each petal.

Elaine--no, he would not see her again--*now*. But beyond the skies and beyond the stars, in the great *BEYOND*--ah, it would be sweet then--Nor would there be aught of opposition, for even here her father loved him. And Simonson recalled Shakespeare's lines:

"Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
*Still questioned me the story of my life,*  
*From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,*  
That I have passed."

--but the day is dawning--I--wonder--

Monday, April Third, dawned on a gray and cheerless city: President, Vice-President, and Cabinet gone; Congress gone; Judiciary gone; wealth and fashion all gone; children all gone--only a handful of Confederate soldiers left to quell riots, fight incendiary fires, and as far as possible put a quietus on public massacre and private assassination; all the rest, too few to be of much avail to their idolized but dying Cause, had gone to be chased like quail and rabbit from cover to cover, till finally bagged by the Mighty Appomattox Hunter--yet truer, braver, nobler men never fought at Marathon, Thermopylae, or Balaklava, at Bunker Hill, Concord, or Brandywine, and--"when can their glory fade?"

And the Mighty Appomattox Hunter himself was at last to say at Mt. McGregor, in the chill of the deepening dusk of the eternal night, speaking of all the gray-clad host, all

the way from Belmont to Appomattox, that had proven themselves worthy of his most relentless steel, "Yes, they were conscientious, all of them—I never doubted it."

And the conscientious man: he may be killed, but never conquered. "*The Guard dies, but never surrenders.*"

But there was no time for theatricals or embroidered formalities this Monday morning in Richmond—now for twelve hours *not* the Confederate Capitol, and for more than an hour a *Federal City*—for at this precise moment, Monday morning, April Third, General Weitzel was hoisting the Stars and Stripes over the Capitol, though the news had not yet reached Libby Prison, or the suburbs of the city—so suddenly, and without sound of arms, had the Blue Coats appeared and taken possession. *Richmond had fallen.*

It lacked but a minute of 8 o'clock when Vice-Commandant Sanderson appeared at the door of the death-cell with five soldiers. Sanderson was a fierce hater of the North. His plantation had been laid waste, and two of his brothers had been killed at Spottsylvania.

"A pleasant duty has been deputed to me by the Commandant, sir," he said, with a world of secret satisfaction in his voice. "I'm to have the honor, sir, of escorting you to a certain—ah—function, and of—ah—conducting the—er—ceremonies."

The condemned man made no reply. There was nothing to be said.

It required less than a minute to pass from the Carey Street side of the cellar—used for an additional dining-room after the Seven Days Battle of the Wilderness—to the Dock Street side where the "ceremonies" were to be conducted.

The firing squad was ready.



Major Turney appeared in a moment, calm but very pale. Sanderson had hoped the Commandant would not be present; he wanted all the glory, and sweet satisfaction for himself—and this might be his last chance. Turning to Simonson, he said:

“Would the prisoner like to speak?”

“No.”

“Has the Commandant anything to say—any suggestion?”

The Commandant shook his head, only taking the prisoner’s hand a moment.

The prisoner’s eyes now were bandaged.

“A moment, Sanderson,” said the Commandant. “Is it necessary that the prisoner’s hands and feet be manacled?”

“Certainly, Major Turney.”

“I think you’re mistaken, Mr. Vice-Commandant.”

“I beg your pardon, Major; but I’m not mistaken. Here’s the printed rules and regulations that obtain——”

“Never mind, Mr. Vice-Commandant,” said Major Turney, now very stern and resolute. “I take the responsibility and, as your superior officer, *suggest* that you have all evidence that he is a *prisoner*, about to be executed for a *crime*, removed—only you may leave the bandage over his eyes.”

Grudgingly the prisoner’s hands and feet were unmanacled.

As this was being done there came the noise of a wild commotion overhead, in the Upper and Lower Chickamauga Rooms—then the whole building seemed to shake. Major Turney’s first thought was of the long-expected massacre of the sentinels by the prisoners, but as the tumult in a moment subsided the peril passed from his mind.

Then came the sound of many feet, the measured tread of soldiers, apparently coming down Twentieth Street and turning east on Dock Street—but that couldn’t be the long

anticipated mob from without to wreak vengeance on the Federal prisoners; possibly it was a regiment that had been detached from the fortification defenses and was being hurried on to reënforce Lee at Appomattox Creek.

"No time to be lost!" shouted Sanderson, for the commotion, both within and without, now was approaching the volume and violence of a tumult—though strangely unlike the Richmond tumults of former days.

There was a momentary silence, waiting for the pre-arranged signal to fire. The unfettered prisoner stood statue-like, though it seemed to him that he could hear his own heart beating. The Commandant was very near, at elbow touch.

Then in quick succession came the three pre-arranged signals, but they were given with such rapidity it seemed there was but one—and that execution and order were simultaneous.

But what had happened? Not the prisoner, but the Commandant himself was reeling, apparently in the throes of death—and but for the strong and ready arms of the unhurt prisoner would have fallen to the floor.

Even the firing squad could not explain it. They only knew that at the instant they had fired a body had come between them and the prisoner; and the next instant they had seen, to their horror, that their beloved Commandant, just at the crucial moment, had flung himself before the condemned young man, and had received in his own body the bullet that had been aimed at the prisoner's heart.

But in a moment every lip was sealed. Thundering down from the Chickamauga Rooms, and from the Gettysburg Room, came the joy-wild prisoners, and in from the street came pouring the Boys in Blue, of General Weitzel's Command, proudly bearing aloft "Old Glory."

In the tremendous excitement the awful tragedy, for a

moment, was forgotten; and Captain Simonson, laying the wounded Commandant on the floor, between sobs exclaimed,

"Oh, Commandant, my dear, dear Commandant! Oh, why have you done this thing? Why have you so wronged yourself? Why have you given your life for me? Why—"

Faintly breathing, but looking up into the prisoner's face with an ineffable smile, the Commandant whispered, "*Because I am your father.*"

There are times in our lives when, for a moment, words lose all their vital force and meaning. We hear them, but are so dazed or obsessed they make no impression on our minds.

Thus it was with Captain Simonson. He was so horrified at the Commandant's act—horrified for the Commandant himself, his wife, Elaine—that the Commandant's bewildering declaration, with its infinite, soul-staggering significance, for the moment was entirely excluded from his mind.

But when at last he *did* grasp it, instead of amazement at the revelation, he was the more amazed that, from the beginning, he had not understood it all. Ah, yes—it all came to him now. *This* was the explanation of his filial affection for the Commandant, the emotion experienced when, on New Year's eve, he had looked upon Benvenuto's "Our Heloise," and his unspeakably-precious, utterly-unsensual love for his ever-adorable Elaine Veronica.

The next moment, however, two women hastily entered the low-ceiled, gloomy, crowded room. Instinctively the chivalrous soldiers knew that, whatever their mission, Love had brought them and, with true soldierly chivalry, opened a way for them to pass.

Captain Simonson was busily ministering to the stricken Commandant, but arose when he saw Elaine, and evidently her mother, approaching.



"We understand," Elaine said, with deep emotion. "Papa wrote it all and sent it to me last night—though we have just read it."

Then simply: "Mama, dear, this is your long-lost Tancred."

And to the Captain: "This is Our Heloise, *your's* and *mine*."

"I am your *sister*, Elaine Veronica."

"You are *Tancred Sebastian Turney*, my *hero-brother*."

"Our Heloise," with a bewildered but heavenly look in her eyes, and Elaine, now were kneeling beside the prostrate Commandant; and *Tancred* knelt with his *mother* and *sister*, beside his *father*.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

SOLUTION OF MYSTERY. WEDDING BELLS. A NIGHT IN PARIS

**I**T was the old, old story of a thwarted lover's hatred of the successful suitor, and the jealous malignity of a woman of sin, all culminating in one of the most dastardly of crimes—the abduction of an innocent mother's idolized babe.

In the great ante-bellum days when South Carolina had more taxable property than Massachusetts; and the bank clearings of Charleston exceeded those of Boston, Philadelphia, or New Orleans; and the society of Charleston was famous around the world for its elegance and splendor; and John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, was Vice-President, and the Nation's brainiest and, after Webster, most eloquent statesmen; perhaps the three richest and most influential families of the renowned Commonwealth were the Dinwiddies, Turneys, and Simonsons. The men of these families were bankers, merchant-princes, and publicists; and the women, usually educated in Paris, were famed for their culture, refinement, and extraordinary beauty.

When Heloise Dinwiddie returned home from Paris, after the completion of her education in that city, she was immediately acclaimed the "Belle of Charleston"—indeed of the entire South.

There were many reasons why she should enjoy this rare preëminence. Her beauty was of the rarest and most exquisite type; her bearing and manner were commanding yet gentle and gracious; she was a fluent linguist, brilliant

conversationist, and accomplished musician. Paternally she was the granddaughter of that Baron Esterhazy Dinwiddie who was one of the great Napoleon's Field-M Marshals at Waterloo, and daughter of Abercrombie Dinwiddie, banker and United States Senator; maternally she was the granddaughter of Honoré Monteagle, who had come over with Lafayette and helped Washington to achieve American Independence, and the daughter of Pierre Monteagle, also a banker, and once Governor of the Commonwealth.

Of course, Heloise Dinwiddie had many suitors—it could not have been otherwise; and of course the lists presently were narrowed down to two suitors, Thomas P. Turney and Abraham Simonson. And this could hardly have been different for the Turney and Simonson families were, after the Dinwiddies, the wealthiest and most distinguished of the many notable Charleston families.

It soon was evident, however, that Turney was the favored suitor, and that Simonson's attentions were accepted only as a matter of courtesy. But when Heloise learned, on indisputable authority, that Simonson had a shameful *liaison* with a certain notorious Madge Brigley, she had her father inform him that his presence at the Dinwiddie Mansion was no longer permissible; and, at the same time, made it known to would-be hostesses that she would accept hospitality at no house where Abraham Simonson was to be a guest. As a result, so distinguished and influential were the Dinwiddies, in a short time Simonson was socially ostracised.

Very naturally, considering his character and manner of life, Simonson now became even more dissipated, and charged his downfall to his successful rival. In this he was entirely mistaken; but he refused to believe otherwise even after Heloise's father, and a detective whom he had employed to ascertain the habits and associations of his



daughter's suitor, had obtained an interview with the furious young man and taken the blame wholly on themselves.

Presently Mr. Thomas P. Turney and Miss Heloise Dinwiddie were married. It was, in keeping with the distinction of both families, a brilliant wedding; and, as the Dinwiddies were Roman Catholics, the mass was said at the Cathedral, with the venerable Bishop of the Diocese as the celebrant.

Of course, Abraham Simonson was not among the invited guests; but as the bridal party came out of the Cathedral the rejected suitor and Madge Brigley, arrayed as bride and bridegroom, including veil and orange blossoms, were driven slowly by—intent upon making a spectacle of themselves, and expressing contempt for the high contracting parties.

None thought that Simonson and Madge Brigley really were married. That was incredible; it was only a disgusting masquerade. But the next edition of the *Mercury* informed them to the contrary. In space paid for by Simonson appeared a shrieking account, written by Simonson himself, of the "celebration of the nuptial ceremony by the Hon. Dennis Monahan, our worthy J. P." etc., etc., and also pictures of the "happy pair."

Matters with Simonson now went rapidly from bad to worse, and from occasional libations he proceeded to prolonged orgies. All this very naturally had a deteriorating effect on his still beautiful, though discredited, wife, and she more and more shared with him his carousals. But for the high esteem in which Samuel Simonson, his father, was held, often they would have been arrested, or even expelled from the city, so outrageous became their conduct.

Of course, Simonson was untrue to his wife—such men always are, and, of course, his wife was intensely jealous

of him—such women, knowing men as they do, always are jealous of their husbands.

By this time Heloise had become a beautiful matron—the mother of two children. Simonson's wife had not become a mother; and Simonson, not respecting his wife, and realizing at last how uncrossable was the gulf between himself and Heloise, in desperation yielded to his old passion for Heloise, and tried to resume his former cordial relations with Turney—and, of course, without success.

Spurned on every hand and beholding the immeasurable happiness of his rival, wedded to the woman he had hoped to wed, and she now the mother of a son and daughter by him, he next became obsessed by a raging desire for revenge—if he could not be as happy as they were, then he wanted them to be as miserable as he was; and more so if possible.

This latter ignoble passion was shared by Madge Simonson—against the wife because her beauty, virtue, and matronly superiority made her a constant menace; against the husband because as Madge Brigley she had tried to inveigle him into her net and he had repulsed and rebuked her.

However, hatred and plottings for vengeance were presently abated for a season when a great sorrow came to the Turneys. Letitia Amora, their eldest child, suddenly died, and the other child, named Tancred Sebastian—Tancred, for the valiant Catholic Crusader, and Sebastian, for the priest who had confirmed Heloise—was known to be sick unto death.

All remedies had failed, and the physicians had frankly confessed that they could offer no hope. In this awful extremity the young mother, in anguish of soul, conceived the idea that the loss of her precious little daughter, and the pending loss of her bonnie baby boy, were a curse sent

on her for some unknowingly-committed, but unforgiven, sin.

The longer she thought of it the more firmly convinced she became that she was not mistaken—and that the only way she could hope to save her babe, not yet a year old, was, in some way, to propitiate God, and thus obtain forgiveness, and the help of heaven.

She was in a desperate frame of mind and immediately sent for Father Sebastian. The maid brought back word that Father Sebastian was attending a retreat at Columbia, and would not return for several days.

She dismissed her maid and sat alone, holding the little sufferer on her lap. He was so weak, and his breathing was so difficult, she thought she would saturate his breast with alcohol, having heard that alcohol was good in such cases. This done she continued to stroke the little breast gently. Presently she thought that possibly baby would take nourishment—but no.

All the while she was thinking of penance, and how she might propitiate the wrath of heaven. Like a flash a thought came to her—it seemed an inspiration. And it was such a beautiful thought. Ah, heaven be praised for the suggestion! God could not fail to yield to such a severe, yet loving exhibition of her contrition. She would do it. She would heat a cross and hold it, red-hot, against her breast until she would forever wear upon her bosom, over her very heart, the symbol of the Saviour's dying passion.

She almost laughed aloud—it was such a beautiful thought! And there could not fail to be merit in such an act of extreme contrition and devotion.

A small iron cross lay beside her on the dresser; and a wax candle was burning. It would not be necessary even to get up—it must be providential.

Seizing the iron cross between the prongs of a candle-



snuffer she held it in the flame of the burning candle. In a moment it was spitting out little jets of hissing fire. It was very hot, and she was glad of it. True, it would hurt terribly, but so much greater the merit to be derived. It would also make an ineffaceable scar—but it would be the shape of the Saviour's Cross, and that was the most beautiful symbol in the world.

With the raptured look of a martyr, and a devout prayer in her heart, she lifted toward her naked breast the now seethingly hot cross, when her hand trembled from excitement, her fingers relaxed, and, in a moment, the flaming cross had fallen and was eating its way into the naked, alcohol-saturated breast of the child.

Fortunately, for both mother and child, the husband and the maid that instant came into the room.

Horried at what she had done the mother fainted in her husband's arms, and the maid bore the suffering babe to another part of the house.

The babe's injuries, though severe, yielded to prompt treatment—though the deep and ineffaceable scar, so coveted by the mother, thenceforward was borne on baby's breast—and presently the babe recovered.

A little later the Black Hawk War broke out and Jefferson Davis, between whom and many of the leading Charleston families, including the Turneys, a lively friendship existed, invited young Turney to "come to the boundless Northwest and do his duty as a Patriot," with the assurance that "the brush with the Indians would be brief, but exceedingly interesting."

Happily, now, there was nothing to detain him. His family was well, his fortune was ample, and his love of adventure in general, and for Jefferson Davis in particular, was boundless.

But the Simonsons' fury against the Turneys had now

revived, and their passion to avenge their fancied injuries and insults had become greater than ever.

The kidnaping of Tancred, the infant son, was really an afterthought on the part of Simonson, but once proposed his childless wife instantly acquiesced; perhaps not so much to wreak vengeance on the Turneys as to obtain a stronger hold on her wayward husband—and, possibly, out of a sort of dumb, subconscious sex-longing for offspring.

Samuel Simonson, whose name the kidnaped babe was destined to bear many years, had now been dead more than a year, having left a smaller fortune than he was reputed to possess; indeed, but for the happy chance of selling all the realty possessed by the elder Simonson, the estate would have been insolvent—all of which was due to the prodigal recklessness and extravagance of his son.

Now that "Abe" was unable to live at his accustomed break-neck pace, he resolved to leave Charleston. So obsessed, too, had he become with the idea that he had been wronged by Heloise and her husband—in fact it had become a mania with him—his only regret at leaving his boyhood home, and the familiar scenes of his youth, was that with him gone the Turneys would be safe from all harm and free to enjoy the happiness he felt, of right, belonged to him.

But if he could kidnap the baby—their only child! With thoughts of satisfied vengeance there now seemed to come a sort of consolation: having Heloise's baby he would have somewhat of *Heloise*—and, in his very unworthy way, he had really been deeply in love with Heloise Dinwiddie.

A roving band of gipsies agreed to kidnap the babe, and deliver the little fellow at Natchez three months later, for \$500 in gold. This arrangement would enable him, Simonson concluded, to escape both peril and suspicion, and to

leisurely take his departure. As to his final destination he did not know or care.

The gipsies carried out their part of the contract; Heloise Turney never wholly recovered from the blow until, in Libby Prison, her son was restored; and "Abe" Simonson and his wife, ever sinking deeper and deeper in dissipation and degradation, with their pitiful but precocious kidnaped baby, became outcasts and vagabonds.

They named him Samuel, somewhat out of reverence for his alleged grandfather, but mainly as proof, circumstantial indeed, that he was their son. They taught him to call St. Joseph, Missouri, the city of his nativity. It was the first town they chanced to think of, and would answer as well as any city—besides it would be easy for the child to remember and pronounce.

The flaming cross, so deeply burned into his flesh, was their greatest source of fear and anxiety regarding his discovery and recovery, and their punishment—as it did, as we have seen, finally enable the father to identify his son.

Major Turney did not die from the injury received the last morning in Libby Prison; and, thanks to the best of nursing and the most loving care, by midsummer he had entirely recovered.

One of the last acts of the Martyred President was to write, on "Samuel Simonson's" immediate application, a full and unconditional pardon for Major Thomas P. Turney—a paper framed with loving care and now occupying the place of honor in Tancred Sebastian's home.

Very sweet and very wonderful were the summer days of '65. Heloise Turney was at last herself again; Captain Tancred Sebastian Turney—they continued to call him "The Captain," and often proudly added, "Our Yankee Captain,



you know"—no longer had occasion to blush for his parents, or to deplore his lack of an honorable ancestry; and Tancred and Elaine found that their love was, indeed, sacred—as in the days of their strange "courtship" they had so often declared it to be, easily—we venture to use the word *blissfully*—changing from lovely lovers to what seemed an even more rapturous relation: that of being the loverliest of brothers and sisters.

"Only," the divine Elaine one day wistfully said, "hasn't my brother any sweetheart at all? It doesn't matter so much for me; for I, dear, don't at all mind being a *widow*, since I have the noblest and handsomest brother in the world."

Then the Captain told his sister all about Marjorie.

Once more it was autumn—and not even the Vallombrosan Vale is more beautiful than Southern Illinois in the fulness of autumn-tide.

A traveler, henceforth to be known as Captain Tancred Sebastian Turney, once more was returning to New Richmond over the familiar Enochsburg Road—but now a rich man, a member of a renowned family, with a fame that was a surprise even to himself.

But there was no feeling of elation; it was rather an emotion of tender melancholy. Here he had formed the sweetest friendships of his life: Judge Gildersleeve, "the dear old Judge," as he ever called him, "only second to his dear father"; noble John R. Noss; brave and enthusiastic Cornelius Blavey; Wilhelm Sanderson, Brigadier-General by *brevet*, soon to enter Congress, and to fail of the Senate by a single vote; Heinrich Vatson, brave as the bravest, noble as the noblest; rugged and uncompromising Amsden Armentrout, dear old Ams, still damning the Southern Confederacy; the money-loving, money-grubbing, semi-Copperhead; the conceited, but not wholly reprobate, Voe Bijaw;

the illiterate but big-hearted Nic Tutwiler and Ham Singleton—ah, well, and the Frothingays, and Grants, and Lev-erings, and the many professional men and tradespeople.

He drove to the hotel, but no one recognized him. On inquiry regarding a certain "Samuel Simonson," he learned that he was *dead*.

"Yep," said Nic Tutwiler, "shot deown lak uh dawg in Lib. Gut no moh'n 'e 'sarved, Ah raickon."

"Yep; ol' Frothy's dead, un th' fambly's gun." On and on, as Southern Illinois people will gossip, with friend and stranger alike.

"Yep; Vergie Culpaipuh's mahr'd—sploiced en Pahrse, er some udder durned seapoht. Mahr'd thuh dad-gummed ohnury li'l runt, Poppunjay, er Pahlfy, er suthin' lak dat."

Visions came of a night at The Elms, of the buckthorn tree, of many a gallop and ramble across the fields and hills, of tête-à-têtes where roses and honeysuckles were the only witnesses—but there were no regrets.

"Yep; ol' Doc's gun ovuh thuh pon', bu's comun' baick; tuh mony freog-laigs, Ah raickun."

"Jedge Gil, d'yuh saiy? Hol'un Co'ht sum's evuh deown ut—fuhgit whah neow."

"Har'ld Culpaipuh? Sho! Mahr'd big uz Pompey. Liv'n' en Sain' L'u's. Gut keids—twuns. W'at d' yuh t'ink uh thut?"

To himself Simonson said: "Marjorie—twins—Harold  
——"

After supper he went out for a walk. No one on the street recognized him. He wended his way toward The Maples. It would be some comfort to see where Marjorie used to live; ah, yes, and a certain night—where she had called to him and——

He went in and walked with bowed head toward the house. Half-way he met a woman—*Marjorie*. Counting

on her inability to recognize him, and dreading to meet *Mrs. Harold Culpepper*, he merely bowed, and, trying to disguise his voice, hoarsely said, "Good-evening."

That was all. But the next moment she was holding his hands and saying, "Is that the only greeting you have for me?"

Still striving hard to control himself: "I'm—I'm delighted to meet you, Mrs. Culpepper."

"Why—why, what do you mean, Mr.—I don't know what to call you now," still pressing a little closer. "But I'm *not* Mrs. Culpepper." There was almost a sob in her voice. "If I'm ever anybody, save—save Marjorie Gildersleeve, it must be——"

There was a world of meaning in her unfinished sentence; a meaning, too, that could not be mistaken.

"Marjorie, my darling!" Simonson exclaimed, "do you mean it? Oh, can it be true? Are you still the—Marjorie I used to know—just the same dear, dear Marjorie? And *will* you be—be *mine*?"

"Oh, no, Mr.—Captain—Baron—or whatever it is, I 'will' not, because I have *always* been yours, ever since that—that *first* night, and—and *two* other nights! Oh, aren't you ashamed of me?"

"Ashamed of you, darling? O Marjorie——"

It was after nine o'clock—and nine o'clock is dreadfully late in Southern Illinois where the people often retire before sundown—before they thought of going in the house. And even then they would not have thought of it if Marjorie's mother had not come to the door and quietly, very quietly, said, "Marjorie, dear?"

"But how could you doubt me, Sammy?—you *must* let me call you that occasionally—when I always just showed you, right out *loud*, that you were all the world to me?" They were now alone in the parlor.



"But, Harold! I knew you were engaged to him; and when he took French leave and returned to New Richmond, and in a few days I heard he had become a benedict, the only conclusion I could come to was that he had—had——"

"Yes; I understand, Tancred—how funny that sounds, but I already like it—that he had married the woman to whom he was engaged. And he did marry the woman to whom he was *then* engaged; but it was not—well, the party of whom you were thinking."

"But you *were* engaged to Harold."

"Only a school-play affair, dearest. Why, do you know, I never kissed Harold in my life, nor did I ever permit him to kiss me; you see, I was saving all my kisses for—for somebody else. And the first and only man that ever held me in his arms and kissed me was a—a certain bold Crusader—let's call him—um—say *Tancred*—and I had to—to almost *make* him. And when he did it I was so—so *mad* at him, I just—just gave him kiss for kiss, and squeeze for squeeze——"

"But, dearest," she continued presently, now more soberly, "I am awfully afraid your great French-South-Carolinian family will not look with favor on your little Southern Illinois sweetheart."

"Southern Illinois sweetheart!" Tancred exclaimed. "Why, the dearest, sweetest, loveliest girls in all God's great, wide, wide world are to be found right here in good old Southern Illinois."

"O-o-h!" with a saucy smile; "are you now thinking of—of Vergie?"

Of course that had to come, sooner or later, for Marjorie, though altogether divine, was, also, just a *little* human; but in a moment she was saying, very soberly and very reverently: "I wouldn't blame you a bit, Tancred;

for Vergie is the purest, sweetest, most beautiful girl I ever saw."

"Then, sweetheart," proudly replied the Captain, "you never saw—*yourself!*"

Two years later all Paris was wild with excitement. That rarest of rare things had happened: the simultaneous appearance, without forewarning, of an epochal drama and of a phenomenal actress—an actress combining in herself such a wealth of beauty and genius as to mark an era in French art, and a play in which the wonderful actress was acting a double part, as in after years she set the fashion of playing both *Hermione* and *Perdita* in "A Winter's Tale."

It was an American play, of the late great war between the States—so far trite enough. But *this* play was so unique in conception, so genuinely and thrillingly dramatic, so heart-gripping and all-compelling, so crowded with puzzling situations and utterly unanticipated *dénouements*, and withal was so happy and yet entirely natural in its tremendous final act as to constitute, as the *Figaro* editorially remarked, "an epoch in dramatic literature; a play that is historically accurate; that is true to the most searching psychology of both head and heart; in which, though it abounds with passages of torrential passion, there is not a single salacious line or prurient suggestion; and, finally—and the *Figaro* wishes to specially note and emphasize this point—no demimonde or hardened criminal appears, and no member of the cast has occasion for blush or regret."

The new actress, whom the same great editor characterized as "the epitome of all histrionic art," was the *petite*, girlish Zarrah Mernhardt; the playwright was unknown.

One night at the Paris Grande early comers observed that the two most conspicuous boxes, usually reserved for royalty, were decked in festal state—one in particular.

This special one the management had decorated with a profusion of flowers and artistically draped French and American flags. There were also prominently displayed large pictures of the great Napoleon and of Abraham Lincoln—two faces especially dear to the French public.

In the evening edition of the *Figaro* of the same day there was a very complimentary reference to a distinguished descendant of the great Baron Esterhazy Dinwiddie—that Baron Dinwiddie who had been one of the bravest and most devoted of Napoleon's field marshals at Waterloo—and an announcement that this distinguished descendant of an illustrious sire would witness the great American play that evening. It was also noted that in honor of the presence of Baron Dinwiddie's American descendant the Emperor and Empress would grace the occasion with their presence.

Major and Mrs. Thomas P. Turney, Captain and Mrs. Tancred Sebastian Turney, Mr. Fred Gildersleeve, brother of the younger Mrs. Turney, and Miss Elaine Veronica Turney, Major Turney's daughter and Captain Turney's sister, all of whom had been touring Egypt, Palestine, and Europe, arrived at the Ritz just in time to dress for the evening performance, for which from Brussels that morning they had ordered a box by wire. Fortunately, they had dined *en route*, though they had not seen the evening papers.

Judge of their amazement when they were conducted to a gaily-decorated box, the one opposite the box reserved for royalty, and found themselves the focal point of every eye, and of a multitude of lorgnettes and opera-glasses. A moment later, however, the Emperor and Empress entered, the curtain rose, and the prologue was being spoken.

As the play progressed, interest deepened into astonishment, and astonishment into wonder. The occupants of the Turney box knew they were to see an American play, but—



this was a *replica* of their own lives; of course, it was to be of the great American War, but—in the very first scene of the first act there was a reproduction of Judge Gildersleeve's residence at New Richmond, and the play told the story of the two evenings there when a certain young lawyer and the Judge's daughter were learning that sweetest truth known to the human heart, and closing with the passionate double parting, at door and gate, of the two lovers, love-conquered but speechless—and the make-up of the girlish Mernhardt made her to appear as the identical Marjorie of the story. The original Marjorie herself sat only a few feet away and looked, with wide-eyed wonder, at the perfect and exquisite reproduction of herself; nor were the other members of the Turney party less astonished.

"Tancred," whispered the blushing young wife, "who *could* have written this play? And really was it—did we act that way?" Then, bending low and scarcely breathing: "But it was glorious, wasn't it?"

But now, in the second act, there was a change—Mernhardt had become the darkly bewilderingly beautiful, passionate, untamed, all-demanding, all-taking, sense-quicken-ing, sense-maddening, but always chaste and honorable Queen of Hearts, "who always had her way"—and with what a wild, intense, sinuous, tempestuous manner, with a thousand almost irresistible little allurements, Mernhardt acted the part! It was an unforgettable prophecy of how one day she was to play the part of Sapho—but now there was naught to offend: she was as a young woman, gloriously beautiful, intensely vital, boundlessly loving and in love, with the utter abandon of innocence and ignorance of peril.

At the end of the second act there was the inevitable call for the author, in this case doubly inevitable because carefully planned beforehand by the management; who, know-

ing the author's dislike of personal notice, also knew that nothing short of a veritable tornado of insistence would move him to respond—and the tornado was not lacking; at the height of which the "Divine Zarrah" herself left the stage and proceeded to the—*Turney* box!

At last the perfectly guarded secret was out. The author—the next day the *Figaro* hailed him as the "Immortal Author"—was none other than Captain Tancred Sebastian Turney, maternal great-grandson of Field-Marshal Baron Esterhazy Dinwiddie.

When at last, after much persuasion, the author appeared on the brilliantly-lighted stage, escorted by Mernhardt, whom Paris already adored, the Emperor and Empress arose in their box—the whole audience rising with them—a mammoth American flag was suddenly lowered, the great orchestra broke out with the martial strains of "Hail Columbia," and the applause and waving of handkerchiefs surpassed anything Paris had witnessed "since Napoleon's return from Elba."

After the third act, "The Immortal Author," to quote once more from the *Figaro*, "and his party were conducted to the Emperor's box, and were duly presented to Their Majesties; after which, returning to their own box, they were visited by many titled and famous people."

Among others came Monsieur and Madame Felix Palfrey, now residing in Paris. Monsieur Felix was prematurely faded and wrinkled; but Madame Vergie was more brilliant and dazzling than ever.

During a moment's aside she said to "Baron Tancred," as she persisted in calling the former "Samuel Simonson," "I have concluded it would have been better for me had I *not* always had my own way," laughing very gaily and debonairly.

That night after the Turneys, a very happy party, had returned to the Ritz—save Fred Gildersleeve and Elaine Veronica, who had been borne away for an hour to some sort of a function at the Tuileries by the gallant old Marquis de St. Vilaire, whom they had met the previous season both at Cairo and at Karnak, and his dashing daughter Gabrielle, the young Duchess de Lévigéné—and Tancred and Marjorie had retired to their room in the “Turney-Gildersleeve Suite,” Major Turney drew “Our Heloise” upon his lap and, giving her a fond caress, said:

“Darling, I never before saw you as beautiful as you are to-night.”

“Nor half as happy, husband dear. O, Thomas, what a glorious son we have—and what an adorable daughter he has given to us! Dear Marjorie, I already love her as I love our own Elaine. And what a high-minded, honorable fellow Marjorie’s brother Fred is—and handsome, too, as is our own noble Tancred. May my loving Heavenly Father forgive me for so adoring our precious boy!”

Just then a low ripple of girlish laughter, very sweet and tender, yet with a luring lilt of gentle sauciness and teasing running through it, and a pleading, earnest, manly expostulation were wafted, perfume-laden, from the terrace on which their suite opened and from the far side of which came, ever and anon, sounds of revelry mingled with the pulsing, sense-quickenings strains of Strauss, Schubert and Cherubini.

“Ah, Elaine, *dearest*, if you but knew—could I but tell you—would you but hear me, take me *seriously*——”

They passed on, and their voices were lost in the *crescendo* strains of music and merry-making.

“Why, Husband, ’twas Fred and Elaine we heard, passing our window on the terrace. Do you think Fred is



really——? And our darling Elaine——? I wonder——  
Oh, I should be so glad if ——”

“Sweetheart mine, my own precious Heloise, the good God who has spared to us the sweetest and dearest of daughters, given to us the sweetest and dearest of daughters-in-love, dear, dear Marjorie, and, after so many years, has restored to us our incomparable Tancred, will care not only for Elaine, but also for Tancred and Marjorie—for all of us. You remember the Good Book says that He cares for each blade of grass, each petal of the humblest flower, and that not a sparrow falleth without His notice.”

“Ah, yes, dearest husband, we can trust Him. But I am so happy, *so* happy since Tancred’s come—and dear Marjorie—and the war is over, and you and Elaine are ever with me, even yet I tremble lest I shall wake and find it all only a dream. But—yes, we can trust *Him!*”









Inscribed  
copy



